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ABSTRACT

This document contains 10 presentation papers from the 1999 International Conference of the Association for Experiential Education. Papers address the outcomes and benefits of experiential approaches and outdoor education for various age groups, as well as the therapeutic use of adventure and experiential strategies. The papers are: "Residential Camping for At Risk Preschoolers" (Bernard Kosberg, Claude Mellins, and Jennifer Pubentz); "Crafting as Environmental Education" (Zabe MacEachren); "Narrative Approaches to Adventure Therapy" (Stephen Gaddis); "The Benefits of Meditation for Outdoor Education" (Jim Ettenger); "Spiraling towards Sustainability: Supporting Facilitator and Training Program Development through Experiential Learning" (Bonnie Mullinix); "W.A.S.H. (We All Speak Here!) and a Learning Model" (Michael St. John); "Experiential Education: The Main Dish, Not Just a Side Course" (Jeff Jacobs); "Unscrewing Yourself: One Approach to Anger Management Groupwork with Adolescents" (Andy Greif); "What Is an Experiential Learner?" (Lynn Donahue); and "Include Me: A Universal Approach to Ropes Challenge Courses" (Karinsue Fink-Miller). (Each paper contains references.) (SV)

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RESIDENTIAL CAMPING FOR AT RISK PRESCHOOLERS

Bernard Kosberg, Claude A. Mellins and Jennifer L. Pubentz

Abstract: A combination of experiential education and residential camping can have positive effects on preschool-age children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems. Outdoor physical and sensory activities such as running, climbing, touching, tasting, and smelling are vital to growth and development and best experienced in natural settings (Rivkin, 1997; Moore, 1993). Positive effects of such activities on young children include better social relationships and improved physical well being (Rivkin, 1997; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

Growing up in New York City and other urban areas is challenging and stressful. Poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, television, the failure of public schooling, and parental obligations outside the home all contribute to a dearth of opportunities for young children to participate in meaningful outdoor experiences.

Preschool Prep at Ramapo Anchorage Camp is an innovative, short-term program which enables young troubled children to participate in planned and structured educational and recreational experiences in a natural, outdoor environment. Utilizing a carefully planned curriculum and young, enthusiastic and caring staff, the camp offers a one-to-one counselor to camper ratio, which allows for significant adult interaction in the children"s programming.

A systematic program evaluation, assessing the quality of the program and its impact on campers was conducted during the summers of 1995-1998. The results of this study indicate that a short-term specialized camping experience can effectively help children develop age-appropriate communication skills, social skills, self-help skills, and motor skills.

Living in an impoverished area of New York City, Lisa's teenage mother was so fearful for her safety that she kept her indoors for most of her young life, allowing her to venture no further than the small, dark hallway of their apartment building. Upon entering preschool, Lisa's gross motor skills were severely delayed, she had difficulty expressing her needs verbally, she was frightened of and easily intimidated by other children, and she clung incessantly to adults.

At age five, Lisa was referred to Ramapo Anchorage Camp by her Head Start agency, which predominantly serves children with significant learning problems. Initially reluctant to participate in activities, it took several days for her to be willing to let go of her counselor's hand. Slowly, and with the help and encouragement of her counselors, she learned to run, climb, hike in the woods and swim in deep water. One summer later, she is frequently seen laughing and playing with her bunkmates or calling from the top of a jungle gym, "Hey! Look at me."

This vignette offers insight into the type of children Ramapo Anchorage Camp works with and the positive effects that a combination of experiential education and residential camping can have on preschool-age children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems. Interaction with the natural world can provide pleasure, leisure and reduced stress levels (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). These types of interactions are particularly beneficial to preschool-aged children, since they learn about the world through physical and sensory experiences (Rivkin, 1997). Outdoor physical and sensory activities such as running, shouting, climbing, touching, tasting, and smelling are vital to growth and development and best experienced in natural settings (Rivkin, 1997; Moore, 1993). Immediate effects of such activities on young children include improved social relationships and an increase in creative play (Moore & Wong, 1997). Long-term benefits appear to be: greater contentment in personal and work-related situations and improved physical well being (Rivkin, 1997; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

In this monograph, we will:

Identify the need for innovative services for young children at risk

Describe the program at Ramapo Anchorage Camp

Detail the study of this unique program and its documented successes

Growing up in New York City and other urban areas is challenging and stressful. Poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, shrinkage of public support systems, failing public schools and substance abuse have negatively impacted generations of family members. Extended family resources are often too strained to compensate adequately for the limitations of parents to care for their children. In addition, the increase of parental obligations outside of the home has left many young children lacking the adult supervision needed to play safely in their own neighborhoods.

The urbanization of America has taken its toll on our youngest children in various ways (Rivkin, 1997). Buildings and roads have replaced natural environments, and the ensuing traffic presents a variety of dangers for young children (Rivkin, 1997). The popularity of television contributes to a decline in children's outdoor activities, as do video games, electronic games and computers, which are frequently used as "babysitters" when parents are unwilling or unable to supervise children themselves (Rivkin, 1997). Moreover, the asphalt and concrete play areas available in many public school and urban environments impede programs from providing children with meaningful natural, outdoor experiences (Rivkin, 1997).

As a result, children now have fewer opportunities to reap the benefits associated with outdoor experiences, such as the development of gross and perceptual-motor skills, improved health, and positive interactions with the natural world (Rivkin, 1997). The National Association for the Education of Young Children asserts that since children with greater access to the outdoors participate in more activities involving physical movement, they are better able to acquire skills needed to safely and independently navigate their environment. This is of particular importance to children under the age of eight who, developmentally, gain their knowledge through hands-on interaction with their environment. Furthermore, for young children with emotional and behavioral problems, participating in an outdoor experiential program allows them to release excess energy, focus attention, and express themselves in an accepting environment.

Preschool Prep at Ramapo Anchorage Camp

Preschool Prep is one of six programs offered at Ramapo Anchorage Camp in Rhinebeck, New York. Founded in 1922, Ramapo is a nationally recognized, residential camping program which annually serves over 1600 at-risk children from early childhood through adolescence. Ramapo's mission is to serve children with a wide range of emotional, behavioral and learning problems in a natural, outdoor environment, providing educational and recreational experiences which promote social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.

Preschool Prep was developed to meet the specific needs of children ages four through six years. The only program of its kind, Preschool Prep provides young children at risk of school failure with a fun-filled learning experience that supports their individual developmental needs and prepares them to return home and enter school with improved readiness and social skills. Since its inception in 1972, Preschool Prep has grown from a two-week respite for 12 children to a model summer program serving 120 children each summer. Utilizing well-planned and structured activities, the staff focuses on improving each child's basic skills in five areas: language/communication, social/emotional development, self-help, motor skills, and school readiness, with a particular emphasis on interpersonal communication and the building of healthy relationships.

In addition to offering a multitude of outdoor activities, Ramapo's Preschool Prep program provides an informal, family-like setting in which adults work with children to help them attain social-emotional and communication skills applicable to both home and school. Studies show that the most productive learning environments involve the interactive experiences that Ramapo's community setting provides (Frede, 1995).

A wide range of carefully structured activities within a predictable daily routine meets the needs and interests of individual children and helps them to acquire specific skills. Each child receives two hours of small group educational instruction per day in the Preschool Learning Center as well as one hour per day of swim instruction. Other activities include boating, hiking, athletics, low ropes course experiences, initiative games, nature walks and gross motor and free play time in uniquely designed playgrounds. Creative opportunities are offered through arts and crafts, ceramics, woodcraft, music and drama activities. Camp is equipped with roller-skating facilities, gymnasiums, a computer center, and an open-air amphitheater for get-togethers and sing-alongs. Ramapo also sponsors off-campus trips to nearby points of interest such as a farm for strawberry and blueberry picking or to the Rhinebeck Center for Performing Arts for puppet shows.

During the summer, campers participate in one or more of three, three-week sessions and live in rustic cabins with six children and five staff members. During this time, children learn to live within a group, play cooperatively, enhance their verbal skills and expand their physical abilities. Camp focuses on teaching values such as honesty, concern for others, responsibility and the courage to do one's best. A one-to-one ratio of counselors-to-campers enables each child to build healthy relationships, increase self-esteem and improve learning skills. Research supports the long-range benefits of early childhood programs with child-to-adult ratios of at least 7:1 (Frede, 1995), particularly for children with special needs.

During the school year, agencies serving very young, vulnerable children have the opportunity to bring groups of children, teachers, staff and parent volunteers to Camp for four-day residential experiences which provide similar benefits in a modified format. In addition to building community among children, parents and agency staff, Preschool Prep programs during the school year model effective techniques for supporting young children's development, promoting skill acquisition and managing challenging behaviors. Long-range studies indicate that programs like Preschool Prep (i.e., Head Start) have immediate positive effects on participating children and their families (Schweinhart, 1993).

Our Campers

Sarah is six years old. For the past five months, she has lived with her mother in a shelter for battered families in Queens. Sarah's mother sustained serious injuries at the hand of Sarah's father, who is now in prison. A quiet and frightened child, Sarah witnessed a great deal of abuse at home and now has frequent nightmares and panics when she is around men.

During her first week at Ramapo, Sarah was exceedingly shy and reluctant to participate. Her second week's performance was improved, although she continued to struggle with the expectations of her counselors. They would strongly encourage her to participate in activities, play with her peers and dress and wash herself. Gradually, Sarah's resistance faded. During her last week at Ramapo, Sarah stunned her counselors on several occasions. She "read" a picture book to a younger child in the Preschool Reading Center, participated in an overnight in the woods, and performed with her bunkmates in the Camper Talent Show. On the last day of camp, Family Visiting Day, Sarah excitedly pulled her astonished mother from one activity to another. She confidently showed off newly acquired skills such as roller-skating, dressing independently, making her bed, setting the table, and effectively using a knife and fork to cut her food.

Corresponding with the mission of Ramapo, the children referred to Preschool Prep demonstrate emerging learning, social, emotional and/or behavioral problems. The core group of agencies who refer children to Camp serve primarily inner-city ethnic minority children from low-income families. Agencies typically refer children from programs such as specialized day care centers, Head Starts, and day cares affiliated with battered women's shelters, mental health clinics and preventive services (programs serving families who are in danger of having children removed from the home). While the majority of these agencies are located in New York City, several are based in New York's Hudson Valley. A recruitment letter sent to agencies asks them to refer children "who are having difficulties at home or in school," with preference given to "children and families in crisis and children with special needs." Agency directors tend to select the children who are most difficult to manage at home and in school and/or who are at risk of being removed from their families.

Parents/caregivers, teachers, and social service professionals report that most children selected to participate have experienced a variety of difficult circumstances such as poverty or neglect, homelessness, physical or sexual abuse, and other extreme traumatic events. The parents may be deceased, terminally ill, unemployed, incarcerated or hospitalized for a mental illness. Campers often demonstrate one or more of the following: poor interaction with peers, depression, low self-esteem, limited attention span, poor impulse and body control, low tolerance for frustration, hyperactivity, limited communication ability, auditory processing problems, difficulty adjusting to new situations, infantile behaviors, academic struggles, inappropriate affect, and oppositional or self-destructive behaviors.

In terms of the demographic characteristics of the children served at Ramapo Anchorage Camp, approximately 37% of Preschool Prep campers are girls and 63% are boys. They are primarily from families of low socioeconomic status; approximately 40% are Black, 39% are Latino, 19% are Caucasian, and 2% are of other ethnicity. Given that the majority of families can not pay for this kind of program, individuals and foundations contribute over 90% of the funds necessary to support Preschool Prep. All Preschool Prep families pay a nominal fee based on family income and need.

Staff

A tall, athletic and strong-willed woman from Wheeling, West Virginia, Anne completed her sophomore year at Duke University a month ago and headed north to test her interest in psychology and teaching as a counselor at Ramapo. Anne couldn't believe the campers had arrived only a week ago. Even after eight intense days and nights of training, she felt amazed at the amount of energy, enthusiasm, and caring attention the boys in her bunk required of her.

She had never imagined it could be this hard — working from 8 a.m. until sometimes midnight with just two free hours—coping with the challenge of living and working with four other counselors—developing a consistent set of values and expectations so that, together as a team, they can teach campers valuable skills and show them how to have fun—learning to deal with and respond to supervisors who are constantly asking her to reach beyond her limits.

Anne thought about leaving several times over the ten-week experience, once even to the point of packing her bag. Each time, though, something happened to change her mind: One night, Michael, who rarely participated at a bunk meeting, told her that his favorite part of the day was playing with her at the sandbox. Another day, Paul finally learned to tie his shoes. Several days later, Corey, at a moment of frustration, was successfully prevented from having a tantrum. And, one morning, after changing "pissy sheets," she and her co-counselors found themselves doubled over with laughter. These types of experiences reminded her why she had come to camp and helped her to realize how much she was learning, not only about working with vulnerable preschoolers, but especially about herself.

The staff of the Preschool Prep program consists primarily of high school graduates and college students who are interested in working with fragile children in an outdoor environment and are interested in pursuing careers in early childhood, elementary or special education, social work and psychology. For this program, 35 counselors and six supervisors are employed to supervise approximately 40 young children in each of three three-week sessions. The staff is geographically and ethnically diverse and represents some of the most prestigious universities in the country, as well as some of New York's top high schools. In addition, Ramapo Anchorage Camp is a community partner with the Corporation for National Service, AmeriCorps.

Staff members report that they were drawn to Ramapo by their interest in working with troubled children and their desire to influence children's lives. Ramapo selects staff members based on their leadership potential, personal values, and ability to demonstrate the caring attitude necessary to relate to and motivate young children.

All counselors and supervisors participate in six full days of orientation prior to the children's arrival. They also receive intensive supervision and ongoing training by the camp's supervisory staff while programs are in session.

Evaluation of the Ramapo Program

Anecdotal reports from those who have participated in the Preschool Prep program, including children, parents, staff, agencies, and camp administrators indicate that the program is extremely successful in achieving its goal of helping young children. To support these accounts, in 1995, a systematic program evaluation was begun. The purpose of this series of studies is to improve the quality of the camp program by examining its impact on the campers. The first study was conducted on the Preschool Prep program. It was hypothesized that the children would demonstrate significant changes in the following areas, corresponding with the camp curriculum: communication, social skills, self-help skills, motor skills, and basic camp living skills. Following is a description of this study:

Method Participants

All children between the ages of four and six years old who attended the Preschool Prep Program at Ramapo Anchorage Camp between 1995 and 1998 were included in this study. All children attended camp for at least one three week session. Children who attended camp for more than one session were only included for their first session. The demographic characteristics and emotional and behavioral problems of the children have already been described above.

Assessment

An instrument to assess children's development and behavior at camp was developed by the camp staff and Board of Directors, including several educators and psychologists with expertise in program evaluation research. It was developed for two purposes: (1) to assess preschool children's development, behavior, and adaptive skills and (2) to train staff to foster the development of these skills in the children.

The instrument is actually based on the curriculum developed for the camp of the Preschool Prep Program. In the late 1980's, the camp's director began reviewing the literature on those preschool age skills that are important and predictive of future success in school and social adaptation. This information was to be used to develop a practical, age-appropriate curriculum for the camp staff to use in their work. The resulting curriculum, behaviorally specific and skills-oriented, is informally referred to as the Camper Guide. (The formal title is Assessing Essential Life Skills: A Guide to Working with Young Children at Ramapo Anchorage Camp.) This instrument, consisting of 123 items, assesses skills in the following areas: (1) Communication (e.g., expressing needs, feelings and ideas); (2) Social skills (e.g., ability to interact with children and adults in an appropriate manner); (3) Self-help skills (e.g., how to take care of oneself, such as personal hygiene, using eating utensils properly); (4) Motor skills (e.g., running, jumping, kicking a ball), and (5) Camp living skills (e.g., moving through camp in an appropriate manner and taking care of the bunk).

Procedures

Prior to the children's arrival, staff members are trained on the use and application of the Camper Guide. A curriculum has been developed for each particular skill area. Counselors are taught how to observe children, approximate their developmental levels, and how to teach or improve upon identified skills. The Camper Guide is also used to help counselors set goals for work with the children for the session.

The Camper Guide is completed on two occasions: three days after the children arrive at camp and two days before the children leave camp. Given that the staff are living with the children and observing their behavior around-the-clock, three days before the initial assessment was considered sufficient for observing skills in each of the target areas. For each child, his or her counselor rates, on a 5-point scale (never, seldom, sometimes, generally, always), how well the child performs each skill; for example, how often a child take turns in games and activities.

Although it may be of some concern that the data was not compiled by impartial outside observers, we greatly respect the way in which our counselor staff diligently approached this task and carefully collected the required information.

Data Analysis

Completed Camper Guides were entered into an SPSS computer database. Statistical analysis of the data was performed to 1) create scores representing the different skill areas that were reliable (factor analysis), and 2) examine changes in children's skill levels from the beginning to the end of camp (paired t-test comparisons).

Results

The Camper Guide was completed (pre- and post-test) at least once for 358 children. This data was used to evaluate the reliability of the instrument and to develop scales to assess whether there were changes in behavior from pre-test to post-test.

Scaled Development

The procedure for scale development was as follows:

First, items with low response rates were eliminated. Several items in the original score were difficult to observe, especially at pre-test. In order to evaluate change, only those behaviors that were reasonably observable at both time points were included.

The 123 items were originally conceptualized as covering 5 domains: communication, social skills, self-help skills, motor skills, and camp skills. For each domain, correlation of each item with the other items was examined. Items with correlations below .40 at either pre-test or post-test were eliminated, since they did not correlate strongly enough with the other items in that domain. The result was five Total Scale Scores for each of the five domains that had high internal consistency (i.e. reliability).

A separate factor analysis was conducted on the items for each of the five Total Scale Scores (principal components extraction with Varimax rotation) to assess whether there were meaningful subscales that could also be used. As a result of the factor analysis, three subscales in the Communication domain (conversation, information, and feelings), two subscales in the Self-Help domain (eating and dressing), and two subscales in the Social Skills domain (following directions and rules/respect) were developed.

Thus, in total, there were 12 scaled scores. Given our approach, it is not surprising that the reliabilities for these 12 scales were high for the sample, since high internal consistency within that sample was a criterion for scale development. The average alpha for the 12 scales assessed at pre-test and post-test was .87 and the range was .72 - .96.

Pre-test and Post-test Results

In order to examine the change in children's skill levels in the five domains over the three week period, paired t-tests were conducted to assess whether post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores. With few exceptions, post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores, indicating skill enhancement in almost all areas. More specifically, children changed significantly from the beginning to the end of camp in four of the five major skill areas (Communication, Self-Help, Social skills, and Motor skills), and in five of the seven subcategories (all of the communication subcategories, eating skills, and ability to follow directions and rules).

Study Replication

In 1998, the study design was repeated with another sample of 114 children. All procedures were exactly the same. The 12 scales continued to show high internal consistency with an average alpha of .86 and a range of .68 - .95.

Significant changes from pre-test to post-test were found in all five of the major skill areas, and in all but the same two sub-categories (ts ranged from –2.21, $p < .05$ to –8.20, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Ramapo Anchorage Camp provides a therapeutic residential outdoor experience for children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems. The Preschool Prep Program is one of the only such programs for children ages four to six years.

The results of a program evaluation conducted over the past four years indicate that this three-week program can effectively help children develop age appropriate skills in communication, including conversation skills and the ability to talk about feelings; social skills; self-help skills; motor skills; and the ability to cooperate and live with other children at camp. Thus, the results of this study support the effectiveness of a short-term, specialized camping experience on the development of "at-risk" preschoolers.

These positive results have inspired the Board of Directors, staff and benefactors of Ramapo Anchorage Camp to continue these kinds of studies so as to further increase the quality of the programs provided in order to be of most benefit to very young, needy children and to create an innovative model for replication.

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CRAFTING AS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Zabe MacEachren

Introduction

. . . Rachelda, a grade 6 student, cradles her new paddle in her arms like a baby as she informs me that she feels like dancing. I respond to her idea with a smile and then turn around to answer another student's question on what they should do next to complete their own paddle. I answer them and when I turn back, Rachelda is dancing down a trail towards the water; her completed paddle is her partner.

. . . I listen to two grade 8 boys chatting as they each sand the paddle they have just finished carving. One of them nods towards some unused cedar boards and says to the other "just think, these paddles were once one of them boards." The other replies "Uh-nn, this paddle was once one of them trees."

. . . With a group of campers around some ceremonial candles, we begin to reflect upon the two weeks we have all spent together at camp. Each camper describes the best thing that they have experienced at camp. Many of them state that their highlight was carving a spoon so they could eat their meals during the second week at camp when no metal utensils were allowed and the spoon became an essential component to their survival.

I frequently wonder what 'ingredients' go into making a craft, that can turn such a simple activity into an occasion to dance, a moment of introspection and connection, or highlight of two weeks of living out of doors. It was only after I had pondered numerous answers to questions about how I got involved in environmental education and what types of experiences connected me most with the Earth, did I start to reflect upon my own making experiences. Presently I am pursuing a Ph.D. in how crafting activities can serve as a practice for environmental awareness. My research involves trying to understand how making experiences shape our relationship and understanding of the natural world. I choose the term making to describe all activities which involve the creation of some item. I specifically use the term crafting to describe the process of making an item which is considered useful, aesthetically pleasing, involves some amount of handiwork and has the potential for encouraging environmental awareness.

Through reflecting upon my own personal experience, examining myths and stories about making items, and studying the narrations of others who create, I have become better aware of the wide variety of forms making activities can take. I have sought to understand what specific characteristics of making activities can lead to or encourage different perceptions about nature. Making activities, (even those based at environmental education programs,) can involve a wide array of projects and materials, ranging from the strictly decorative to the useful, from plastic gimp to totally organic material.

In the early decades of the 19th century Ernest Thompson Seton, founder of the League of woodcraft Indians (whicn later became the Boy Scouts of America,) emphasized craft and nature study activities for youth. His 'birch bark roll' and woodcraft manuals were some of the first crafting activities specifically associated with nature study programs. Even today some camps and educational programs continue to connect art/handicraft/craft education with environmental education, but few of these programs provide any significant theory or justification as to why or how making experiences can serve as environmental education. Literature on making activities seldom includes any in depth analysis of environmental education.

David Orr states that one of the problems in education today is that science education has replaced environmental education. We no longer understand broad based ecological principles that involve concepts of good citizenship, instead we are focused on succeeding at specific tasks. We demonstrate a faith that all technology is good technology and will serve to solve our problems in the end. Philosophers of technology such as Ursula Franklin and Albert Borgmann explain how technology is distancing us from the artifacts in our life. Franklin discusses technology as the practice of doing something and describes how it has become increasingly prescriptive instead of holistic. Borgmann explains how technology has encouraged us to abandon the things in our lives which offer us engagement and to replace them instead with devices which only offer diversion with the world.

How is this trend of embracing technology to be limited, so that real meaningful experiences which engage us with the environmental can return? Philosophers like Morris Berman and David Abram suggest a solution resides in the return of sensory based experiences and full bodily involvement. This is were the ancient significance of crafting experiences returns. (It is interesting to note that Franklin, Borgmann and Berman all draw examples from crafting activities to explain and support their ideas.) Crafting activities are dependent upon sensory rich engagement and the mind submitting to the body's awareness. Through crafting we must learn 'lessons from the land,' as we listen to the material we touch in order to succeed in our endeavors to create. The experience of trying to bend a branch, teaches our body about limits and balance in a manner which cannot be easily expressed in words or even represented in a computer program. Yet the ability to bend a branch into a hoop demonstrates some embodied sense of understanding and could be considered a demonstration of what something like sustainability might feel like. Many crafting experiences (like carving) encourage us to attend to and work with 'the grain.' Likewise something like crafting a clay pot can hold wisdom about local soil conditions and the power of fire.

But the world is full of items, all made by people and these items vary in the amount of environmental awareness they demonstrate. What aspects of the making process encourage us to attend to our senses, the area where our body intermingles with the natural world through touching the material? My research has shown that for crafters, the deepest connection with nature seems to come from experiences when a person walks into the natural world and is able to create a tool or item which is to be used. Richard Nelson's reflections upon snowshoe crafting with Yoyukon people and James Dina's own explorations of paddling in a birch bark canoe he crafted, are two exceptional narrations that explore the deeper aspects of what crafting experiences can provide in terms of environmental awareness.

Unfortunately few people ever have the opportunity to experience walking out onto the land, gathering materials, shaping them through the use of their own body and then using the item. The possibility of offering crafting activities to people living in an urban environment, attending a camp or an outdoor center may seem confined and limited by the size of the natural area and the impact it can absorb. But the alternative of simply obtaining purchased materials for making projects may be just providing the illusion that all is well in the distant land from which the purchased material originated. Well guided crafting experiences can aid participants to attend to the impact of the local natural environment and make connections with distant areas their personal choices of consumerism may effect.

A well developed crafting curriculum serves to provide a practice which encourages us to attend to the environment and it provides a context for knowing that is rooted in the body and senses. The environmental education that results from crafting experiences allows issues like sustainability and carrying capacity to be felt and experienced through the body and not just understood through the mind. Environmental education practitioners need to learn how to design or shift a making activity into a crafting activity that provides a context for environmental awareness to occur. Asking specific questions of participants may be all it takes to encourage deeper environmental awareness while crafting. Environmental education programs need to ensure that they offer and shape crafting experiences that will immerse a person in the challenge of defining who they are by recognizing what they take and offer back to the natural world–the world which surrounds them and upon which they are ultimately a part and dependent.

What follows are what I call guideposts. They can serve as platforms on which to examine the perspectives of the environment offered by various making activities. They aided me in determining what hidden assumptions may reside in making activities run at environmental education programs. I established these guideposts after examining both my own personal experiences and others descriptions about their making experiences. These guideposts have offered me criteria by which to examine and develop crafting curriculum which explores a deeper relationship and connection with the natural world.

Each guidepost is named, outlined with a brief description and then followed by questions. The questions come from a critical exploration of ideas pertaining to making curriculum and are aimed at encouraging movement from a place of shallow understanding to one which may encourage a deeper awareness and offer new perspectives of the environment.

Origin–The origin guidepost is about the ideas which inform us whether we should or should not make something.

Should anything that we can imagine be created? Will the creation of an item allow us to fulfill a need or satisfy a want? To what extent should the toxicity, and long lasting effects of the materials involved, influence what we make? (i.e. Every time we use a plastic bead we must remember that its existence will survive our own? How should this awareness effect what we choose to create?) Are dreams, visions and/or our imagination inspired by a natural influence or an ego seeking recognition?

Seeking–The experience of traveling on the land in order to find materials for crafting purposes. The observations and knowledge that informs the patterns for determining how, when and where we will look for crafting materials.

How do we come to know the material when we encounter it in its natural environment compared to the material we can purchase in a store? (i.e. Is it a living tree or lumber?) What do we learn about the health of an ecosystem when we wander the land seeking a crafting supply? (i.e. Are specie populations increasing or decreasing?) What do we think about property relationships when we compare traveling on common, public or private land? (i.e. Can land trees, animals etc. ever be truly owned?) How did concepts of ownership originate? What value is placed on hard to obtain material which requires great physical effort in acquiring it? (i.e. How does the population of harvesters or the availability of technology influence harvesting impacts?) How have we learned to 'read' the landscape or communicate with it so we feel guided towards the material we seek?

Harvesting–The experience and acts of expression surrounding the moment of actually taking another life form in order to procure the material needed by which to create something.

Are we acknowledging or recognizing (through any prayer, song, expression or gesture) that we are dependent upon other life forms? Do we recognize what we are harvesting as a sentient being and offer some form of expression or consolation for what we are taking? What are our personal and cultural manners of expressing gratitude and appreciation for the material we take from the land? Do we provide a small offering or token as an expression of understanding that a greater exchange is being sought? Do we harvest material with the same respect that we wish our own body would be treated? (E.g. using a quick clean cut to remove a tree branch (limb) instead of tearing it off.) What do we know about the criteria which determine when we have harvested enough and to take more would be harmful to future supplies. (i.e. What do we look for when determining how many plants can be sustainably harvested from a specific area, like an outdoor school center? What do we learn about the environment where crafting material originates when we purchase supplies at a store in comparison to harvesting it ourselves? How large a land base is required to provide for all the material artifacts we are accustomed to?) Does harvesting materials aid or encourage new growth?

Resonance of Movement–The perception of the repetitive moments involved in making something.

Are the repetitive motions involved in crafting perceived as a boring, tedious task which must be endured by the body, or as an opportunity to seek a rhythm of motion by blending the grain/fibers present in the crafting material and one's own physical being? Can one allow the repetition of movement to soften the busy mental activities of the mind, so a more meditative, rocking, relaxed state can become familiar to the body? Why is "crafting", "making" or "creating" so often considered a healing act?

Embodied Designing–The actual moment of forming and shaping which the crafting activity engages us in. The sensory involvement required by the processes.

Do we work from a master blueprint and never allow the material to inform our decisions, or does the material influence the outcome? (i.e. Does the desired form encourage us to go with the grain or against it during the making process?) How is our body informed by the material? What senses are involved and attended to? What are the challenges in expressing a sense instead of a thought? (E.g. bending wood allows the body to inform the mind when a limitation is reached. This experience encouraging us to trust what our body knows, yet may find difficult to acknowledge or express.) How does a design express a cultural understanding of its landscape? (E.g. If building designs follow linear and angular floor plans, how do they convey or invite understanding about the importance of circles and cycles?)

Utility and Use–The distinguishing factors which reside between understanding and balancing the value of mental introspection and bodily engagement.

Does the item made continue to engage the body through use or does it only excite the mind through its limited function? Does the utility component of a made item move us into relationship with the land or only as a displayed item which is to be pondered? (E.g. Framed pictures are a representation of something which may encourage introspection and reflection of a past experience they also have a limited ability to continue to engage the body with the environment. i.e. What does a picture of canoeing offer in comparison to a paddle and canoe which hold the potential of an engagement with the environment—a real experience.)

Community Celebration–The cultural way by which we express our relationship with the land through the items we create and the manner by which we acknowledge our need to make in order to define who we are.

How is the importance of a craft in a culture expressed through stories, songs, dances and celebrations? (E.g. During the fur trade era many Canadians experienced a paddle and/or snowshoe dance. What perspectives about paddles and snowshoes did such dances offer their participants.) How do we as humans express our joy and/or skill at being able to make something? How can our expression move beyond a monetary value which might be exchanged in order to acquire an item? How do we convey the history of our ability to craft something?

Returning Back–The perceptions and actions which accompany the material remaining from the making process.

Do we perceive the by-products of our crafting activities as scraps or remnants? Do we dispose of them in a garbage, drain or recycling bin? Do we somehow ensure that they are returned to the natural processes of which they originated? (E.g. wood shavings being returned to the forest floor) How is our knowledge of what to do with these materials influenced by our perspectives about the land and/or original sources of these materials? (E.g. Many myths and traditional practices inform cultures what to do in regards to the artifacts they create.)

Closing Thoughts

By establishing crafting activities that recognize aspects of each of these guideposts, we are encouraging making experiences to become more holistic and less superficial.

Crafting activities can encourage participants to embrace and immerse themselves in a sensual relationship with the land, marvel at all its complexities and wonders, then rise to the challenge of exploring human's role on earth and what it means to live sustainably. By doing this we will be providing good environmental education.

The more we can engage ourselves with the questions surrounding these eight guideposts the more meaningful the experience of crafting can become. The items we encounter in our life will be better recognized as something that fulfills a need or a want, stems from a commodity or engagement based consciousness and aids our awareness of how all the artifacts in our lives stem from the materials the land provides. Such awareness may allow us to best answer questions like: how much can the earth continue to provide us and what does real sustainability mean? As we experience different crafting activities and continue to explore the various perspectives raised by each guidepost, we are encouraged to immerse ourselves deeper into the natural systems of earth; these are systems which we need to recognize and understand our own part in. This is what environmental education should be about and experiences such as crafting can provide this.

By carving a spoon and eating with it, shaping a bowl and cooking with it, whether weaving fibers or feeling the animal move through the leather protecting our feet, we are crafting an environmental education for our future.

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NARRATIVE APPROACHES TO ADVENTURE THERAPY

Stephen R. Gaddis, M.S.

Introduction

Adventure therapists offer a variety of ways for understanding and explaining how adventure-based experiences are helpful. My purpose in this brief monograph is to describe how I believe narrative therapy approaches (Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996; White & Epston, 1990) can help frame adventure therapy work (Gass, 1993; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). My intent is not to prove narrative approaches are better or more legitimate than others because those claims often disqualify valuable different perspectives. Instead, I want to share ideas to (a) incite dialogues about adventure therapy worldviews and (b) explore a perspective that some practitioners might find appealing and helpful in adventure therapy work.

Context

This paper is written for those practitioners who identify themselves as therapists or consider their work therapy. In other words, my interest has to do with clients and consultants who have agreed the primary purpose for their relationship is to help the clients experience greater satisfaction with their lives and/or relationships. I agree with those who believe it is important to maintain a distinction between therapy and therapeutic. For me, this distinction centers on the contract negotiated with clients.(1)

Therapy and Problems

As adventure therapists, therefore, I believe we all share concerns about the problems in people's lives and relationships. We care about the ways those problems leave people feeling dissatisfied, isolated, and defeated. Often, however, we understand problems differently depending on our particular worldviews. Our different understandings are shaped by the various metaphors we use to make sense of our lived experiences (McNamee & Gergen, 1992; Rosenblatt, 1994; White & Epston, 1990). Social workers and family therapists, for example, often rely on systems metaphors to help them understand problems, change, and health.

Narrative Metaphors

For some time now, I have been attracted to narrative metaphors to help guide me in my family therapy work. I find narrative metaphors support my preferred view of people as good, resourceful, and capable of change. My hope in this monograph is to briefly describe some of the ways I believe the narrative metaphor can complement our desire to use adventure experiences in therapy.

Family therapists Michael White and David Epston (Epston & White, 1992; White & Epston, 1990) introduced psychotherapists to the idea that we make sense of what we experience through stories or personal narratives. For instance, to make sense out of writing this monograph, I believe I must fit it into a story I have about sharing my passion for this work with others. I also fit it into my stories of wanting to have an influence in the field, make some money, and so on. Taken together, this collection of stories makes up the larger story I hold about who I am as a person. Moreover, for you the reader to make sense of this monograph requires you to place what you have read into stories you currently hold about who you are as a practitioner, what you believe about therapy, and so on.

Stories not only help people make sense of the present and the past, they also help shape what we expect will happen in the future (White & Epston, 1990). Assuming stories help us organize and interpret our lived experience, it follows that stories literally shape our personal realities. Our actions, thoughts, and feelings are constituted through the stories we rely upon to understand the world. They bring certain ways of understanding to our awareness and obscure others. For example, it is difficult for me to entertain a view of myself as someone who does not care about this work if I hold the story that I do.

Dominant Stories

Over time, it seems people begin to rely on certain stories, which then become dominant in our lives. I believe we internalize these stories, or make them such a part of our way of thinking that we take them for granted and assume the stories represent absolute truths (White & Epston, 1990). This can be problematic when our dominant stories continuously lead us to experiences that are dissatisfying. When people find themselves living through stories that are dissatisfying they often seek out or are mandated for therapy.

During my adolescence, for example, I had internalized a story with the theme that I am a bad person. Many events supported this story. I was angry, did not do well in school, and did not have many friends. Over time, I began to believe this story was an accurate reflection of who I was as a person. The story became more and more powerful as it continued to shape my actions, thoughts, and feelings. The more I lived through this story and acted "badly," the more I believed it represented who I really was. And, others as well accepted and supported the story that I was a bad person. Yet, the story that I am a bad person could not account for the way I felt about being a bad person. Though this feeling was mostly invisible to others, I hated the idea that I was a bad person.

Subjugated Stories

As I have implied, people are multi-storied. No single story could ever account for all our lived experiences as they are too rich, complicated, and diverse (White & Epston, 1990). However, certain dominant stories gain enough power to subjugate or oppress alternative stories that might be more helpful. As an adventure therapist, I am interested in helping clients bring forth their subjugated stories so they can be free of the dominant stories that are troubling them (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Viewing problems as stories significantly changes traditional ways of relating to "clients." Rather than diagnosing and treating people, therapy relationships are about co-authoring new stories that are more helpful (White, 1995, 1997). From this perspective, people and relationships are not seen as deficient, weak, or "less than." Instead, people are viewed as capable, knowledgeable, and competent persons who are oppressed by problematic stories. A common rally cry heard among narrative therapists is: "The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem" (O'Hanlon, 1994).

Re-Authoring and Personal Agency

The goal for narrative work, therefore, has to do with helping clients re-author their lives and relationships (White, 1995). The objective is not only to generate preferred stories, but also to help people experience more personal agency, or the sense that they can shape their own lives and relationships (Tomm, 1989). This is important because problem-saturated stories typically leave people feeling helpless and hopeless. My old problem-saturated story about being a bad person, for example, often left me feeling trapped and isolated. I did not believe it was possible to be anything but bad, since I assumed the story was accurate and true.

For me, the process of helping people re-author their lives and relationships typically involves first trying to understand the stories that are leading to troubles or problems -

in their lives. This objective requires me to take a curious stance with clients. Asking many questions about what is upsetting clients helps them to make their stories visible.

Externalizing/Deconstruction Stories

Once stories begin to emerge in my work with clients I often ask clients to name the problems they have been describing. For example, I gave my story the name "Badness." Naming stories helps challenge the idea that stories represent essential truths about a person or relationship. It helps externalize dominant problem-saturated stories or "problems," or separate it from the persons own identity, so that alternative stories may be entertained (Tomm, 1989; White & Epston, 1990). "Depression," "Shithead," "Scaredy Cat," and "The Blue Can" are examples of names my clients have given their stories.

Once stories are named, clients can begin to explore the ways their stories have influenced their lives and the ways they have influenced the stories (White, 1995). This process again helps deconstruct the stories' claims that they accurately represent who the client is by nature. Here are some examples of questions that therapists might ask at this stage. How did "Depression" originally introduce itself to you? What does "Depression" want for your life and relationships? Has "Depression" helped you in any way that was important? Are there ways that "Depression" tricks you into doing things against your own better judgment? What kind of relationship do you want with "Depression" now? Who would be least surprised to know that you don't like your relationship with "Depression?" Can you tell me about times when "Depression" had less power over you?

Preferred Stories

These kinds of questions bring forth alternative and subjugated knowledge that people have for their lives and relationships. This knowledge invariably excites people, making them more reflective and interested in their own lives (White & Epston, 1990). The answers also provide the rudimentary structure for new, preferred stories (White, 1995). For example, once I realized that "Badness" wanted to keep me from having confidence and healthy relationships, I began to notice those times that I did feel confident and those relationships that were successful. A story began to emerge that I was capable and worthwhile. This new story became a primary interest of mine. I wanted to find ways to make it more powerful so that "Badness" would eventually lose its hold on me. The process of externalizing stories and exploring their role in people's lives makes those stories new and strange again, which undermines the strategy those stories use to maintain dominance.

Unique Outcomes

In my re-authoring conversations, unique outcomes, or events that cannot be accounted for by clients' dominant stories, always emerge (White, 1991). A large part of the skill I am trying to develop has to do with recognizing those events and exploring them with clients to see whether they are candidates for alternative stories. Unique outcomes are present in people's dreams, hopes, desires, lived experiences, and so on. My Outward Bound experience, for example, constituted a powerful unique outcome in my own life when I was nineteen. It was very difficult for me to fit my month-long alpine experience into the story that I was a bad person because I had had many experiences of success on the trip. It is these kinds of events that potentially provide the powerful antidote to the claims that stories like "Badness" make on lives and relationships. Sadly, over time my Outward Bound experience became subjugated and made invisible again by the story that I was bad. I see my job now as being primarily about resuscitating those experiences that support people's preferred views of themselves. I believe this process will make it increasingly possible for clients to actively determine the shapes of their lives.

Preferred Stories

In therapy, I help clients link their unique outcomes together so they generate a richly described preferred story (White, 1995). Once preferred stories become clear, they represent the road map for the territory of therapy. Together, my clients and I begin to plot lived experiences according to whether they fit more with the problem story or preferred story. This process helps reveal the strategies the problem story uses to maintain its power. It also helps highlight the wisdom, strength, and knowledge that clients can use to protest the problem story's influence. "Setbacks" are viewed as opportunities to better understand the strategies "problems" use to try and re-assert their power. As these strategies are exposed, counter-strategies can be co-created to undermine future attempts "problems" make.

Changing relationships with "problems" can be difficult because they have long histories of shaping lived experiences. One way to support persons' efforts to live through preferred stories is to create communities of concern (Madigan & Epston, 1995). These communities consist of persons who are willing to support persons in their struggles to live their lives apart from the problem stories that dominated them.

Narrative-Based Adventure Therapy

I hope, that as adventure practitioners, you have been thinking about the ways that re-authoring could be enhanced or enriched by experiential learning and adventure ideas and practices. I have been playing with these ideas for a number of years. This monograph allows me, however, to only briefly describe some of the ways I believe narrative and adventure ideas complement one another.

Adventure practices can help all aspects of the re-authoring process. They can help identify problem-saturated dominant stories, externalize stories, spawn and highlight unique outcomes, and generate and support preferred stories. In fact, each part of the experiential learning cycle (Schoel et al., 1988) can be useful. Adventure-based curriculums, for example, can be designed so that problem-saturated stories are externalized and preferred stories are witnessed. Each activity can be framed as an opportunity to learn more about the influence that "problems" have on clients' lives and relationships, and the strategies they use. Clients can be encouraged to notice and use new personal resources that help undermine problem stories' power.

Adventure-based activities themselves often provide rich moments where clients are acting, thinking, and/or feeling in ways that cannot be accounted for by their dominant stories. The activities, therefore, are pregnant with unique outcomes. Adventure therapists can capitalize on these opportunities to join with clients in exploring alternative versions for the clients' lives and relationships. Together, clients and therapists can co-witness unique outcomes and preferred stories in action. Thus, unique outcomes are no longer events outside the therapy experience (as they often are in more traditional therapies), but something therapists and clients share together. These concrete unique outcomes, which can be referenced again and again, serve as evidence for clients' use of their personal agency.

The sequential nature of adventure-based programming also can be helpful. As clients have experiences of success, they gain confidence. Their confidence can inspire them to ever-more successful performances of their preferred stories. The recursive relationship between success and confidence can undermine the hopeless and helpless effect "problems" have on people. The group format of adventure therapy also is beneficial. Participants can develop into communities of concern for one another.

Conclusion

I am very excited by the many possible directions narrative metaphors and adventure therapy can take one another. I have named but a few and only briefly described them. I hope this monograph fits into a story that is sustaining of our emerging adventure therapy profession.

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(1) I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of my monograph who reminded me about the important distinction between therapy and therapeutic.

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THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Jim Ettenger

"To understand life is to understand ourselves, and that is the beginning and end of education. Education is not merely acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts; it is to see the significance of life as a whole" (Krishnamurti, 1957). Outdoor education should be approached in a similar fashion. Outdoor education is not merely about being able to read a class III river correctly, learning backpacking skills, or evaluating snow conditions. Outdoor education should begin, involve, and finish with self-reflective activities. Meditation is a technique used for self-reflection, and has many proven psychological and physiological benefits. It enables people to discover more about themselves, and because of this, would be a great addition to any wilderness program.

This paper addresses two issues:

1. The benefits of meditation for outdoor education programs.
2. The practical application of meditation.

Why practice meditation? There are many forms of meditation or awareness training for people to choose. Research in the effects of meditation has shown meditation to produce psychological benefits including access to theta brain wave states for optimal learning (Steinhardt, 1997), decrease stress (Benson, 1984), more positive self-concept (Emhavardhana, Tori, 1997), and physiological benefits such as lowered heart rates, blood pressure, and decreased oxygen consumption (Hirai, 1989), and meditation can help a participant feel more engaged, and less bored on outdoor education trips (Trunnel,E, White, F., Cederquist,J., & Braza, J. 1996).

One main reason to consider the use of meditation in outdoor education programs is to look at Mihali Csikszentimihalyi's optimum learning state (OLS) research. Mihali Csikszentimihalyi stated the combination of factors that trigger the (OLS) include using deep breathing, relaxation, and verbal affirmations. The result was a three step technique that would only take a few minutes. "Earliest research into (OLS) linked the technique with obtaining theta brain waves. Investigations into electroencephalogram brain waves showed that when learning is at its peak, the brain emits electromagnetic waves at four-seven cycles per second (CPS), or theta range. The problem for those seeking access to the OLS is that it is difficult to attain. Steinhardt's three steps include:

1. Using deep breathing to create the OLS.
2. Using relaxation to deepen the OLS.
3. Using affirmations to lock in the OLS"(Steinhardt, 1997).

This allows the student to go from a normal, thinking beta state, into a relaxed alpha state, and then into a theta state, which is considered the most beneficial area of brain wave activity for intense concentration.

In his book, The Relaxation Response, Herbert Benson defined the concept of meditation as the inborn capacity of the body to enter a special state characterized by lower heart rate, decreased rate of breathing, lowered blood pressure, slowed brain waves, and overall reduction in the speed of metabolism. In addition, changes produced by the response counteract the harmful effects, lowered immunity and uncomfortable feelings of stress [from the production of fight or flight hormones.] (Benson, 1984.) He believes certain meditative prayerful instructions can be used to elicit the relaxation response. His four step procedure involves:

1. finding a quiet environment;
2. consciously relaxing the bodys muscles;
3. focusing for ten to twenty minutes on a mental device, such as the word one or a brief prayer; and
4. assuming a passive attitude toward intrusive thoughts. (Benson,1984).

Benson's research has proven to: relieve headaches, enhance creativity, overcome insomnia, enhance the therapy of cancer, control panic attacks and alleviate some symptoms of anxiety, reduce overall stress and achieve greater inner peace and emotional balance (Benson, 1984).

Another main reason to use meditation in outdoor education programs can be found in K.R. Wallace's research. "In 1972, K.R. Wallace, and H. Benson reported extremely interesting tentative findings connected with the physiological correlation's of meditation. Thirty-six subjects were given short-term training in the techniques of transcendental meditation (an awareness producing activity). Measurements were then made before, during, and after meditation of their blood pressure, heart rate, blood lactate concentration, oxygen consumption, and carbon dioxide elimination. It was learned that during meditation, heart rates decelerate, oxygen consumption falls sharply, blood lactate concentration declines. Electroencephalograms (EEG's) taken of these subjects during meditation showed a marked increase and greater amplification of alpha brain waves" (Hirai, 1989).

In 1996, Emavardhana and Tori conducted a study over a seven day period during a vipassana meditation retreat, with over 400 Thai teenage meditators. The study was designed to assess changes in self-concept, ego defense mechanisms, and spiritual beliefs. The results show that "the retreat had positive effects on self-concept and unconscious ego defense mechanisms" (Emavardhana, Tori, 1997). Also, the participants became characterized by greater maturity and less reactivity to common stressors.

Also in 1996, Trunnell, Cedarquist, White, and Braza made a study about optimizing an outdoor experience for experimental learning by decreasing boredom through mindfulness training. The study used the method of concentration meditation (or Samatha meditation).

To clarify, Buddhist mindfulness training is composed of two aspects:

Concentration (Samatha) meditation: The attention is placed on breathing.

As thoughts, feelings, or sensations occur, they are named and the focus is returned to breathing. For example, what am I thinking? - planning, worrying about, what am I feeling? - happy, sad, joy, anger, what am I experiencing?-tension, peace.

Insight (Vipassana) meditation- The attention stays with the arising and passing of thoughts, feelings, or sensations. No returning to breath focus, and no labeling.

The Trunnell, et. al., study involved college students enrolled in the University of Utah recreation courses in 1994. Half of the students were instructed in mindfulness meditation during the outdoor experience weekend trips. The results show that participants who received mindfulness training were less bored, and felt more engaged in activities than those whom had not received mindfulness training (Trunnell, Cedarquist, White, Braza,1996).

The practical application of meditation.

For many people, meditation is an esoteric concept. They imagine Indian yogis sitting in caves or monasteries, and have reservations about trying the activity. But what happens when a person has a paradigm shift towards meditation? This would happen if the word "meditation" is replaced with "awareness" or "mindfulness". Meditation is awareness. This includes awareness of ones thoughts, emotions, feelings, and sensations, through full engagement in the present moment.

Concentration is required in all meditation practices. The meditator must be able to keep his/her mind focused on a specific task or object, and allow distractions to go by, no matter which technique is used. "To develop concentration, we choose a single object of awareness, the primary object, that the attention is "re-minded" to return to and encouraged to stay with. A basic difference between various meditation forms such as TM, Sufi dancing, confronting Zen koans, sitting meditations, Christian prayer, chanting mantra, listening to the inner sound of current, observing sensations in the body, visualizing techniques, or watching the breath- is the primary object on which concentration is developed" (Levine, 1989.) Many of the above activities can be practiced as meditations, along with activities such as watching a camp fire flame, any martial art, yoga, dancing, walking, lying down, any fitness activity, work, talking. Virtually every aspect of life can be done with more concentration or awareness.

How to traditionally practice meditation

Traditional Tibetan, Zen and other common meditation principles will be briefly described. The most common meditation principles include:

1. Regulation of posture- This includes sitting straight but relaxed, keeping head, neck and spine aligned, and shoulders loose. Crossing legs, Indian style, distributing weight evenly and sitting on pelvic bones on a cushion.

2. Regulation of breath- breathing normally and focusing on the point where air leaves and enters the body (the end of the nose). Focusing on the exhalation and inhalation.

3. Regulation of concentration- focus on outbreath and inbreath. When a thought, feeling or sensation occurs, acknowledge it by labeling it appropriately such as, "thinking, or joy, or confusion, or discomfort . . .". After labeling it, return focus to the breath. The cycle is sure to repeat over and over. Always try to acknowledge what is happening, label it, and return to the breath, without judgment.

This focus can be applied anywhere. An outdoor education student could practice mindful eating, mindful walking during backpacking or scrambling, more mindfulness while rock climbing, more awareness on a challenge course. An increase in awareness might also help the facilitator generate better group debriefings.

Outdoor Meditations

There are various meditations outdoor education students can use in the wilderness. Two examples are mountain and river meditations.

Mountain meditation- Mountains symbolize strength, beauty, and are held sacred in many cultures. Many people have sought spiritual guidance in and around them. When beginning to mediate, find a mountain area, sit cross legged, focus on the mountains shape, surface, ecology, wildlife, and weather surrounding it. Observe how the atmosphere changes the landscape, sometimes rapidly. Observe how you are feeling with the change and how you are like the mountain. Sit up tall, like the mountain. Just observe it! When the meditation is over, then would be time for reflection, via journal writing, or thinking about what transpired. Explore feelings, emotions, thoughts, and sensations which were uncovered.

River Meditation- Find a creek, stream, or river and sit down near the bank. Just observe for fifteen minutes. Next, focus on the running water at one specific area for your concentration. If you are distracted by anything, label it appropriately and return to the point. Notice leaves, twigs, floating down the stream. There will always be things floating downstream, and disrupting your concentration on one point. The floating leaves and twigs can symbolize random thoughts. They will always be there. The purpose is not to stop them, it is impossible. The purpose is noticing them, labeling them, and returning to your concentration point. This practice will ultimately help increase concentration levels for any aspect of your life.

From the research and concepts discussed in this paper, the benefits of meditation in the experiential education world can more clearly be seen. Meditation has proven psychological benefits. It enhances learning through altering brain wave states. It helps an individual attain greater self understanding and peace of mind and lowers stress. Meditators will naturally reflect upon what occurred in their meditation. Through reflection and discussion deeper learning and understanding takes place. This is experiential education- learning by doing with reflection! Meditation can become one more tool, a very powerful tool, in the experiential educator's toolbox, to enhance the climate for learning and enjoyment in the outdoors.

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SPIRALING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

SUPPORTING FACILITATOR AND TRAINING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Dr. Bonnie B. Mullinix

Abstract

"Slowly, slowly catches the monkey" advises the West African proverb. Capturing the elusive "monkey" of sustainability for a training program involves the slow, strategic and supportive spiraling of facilitators through multiple levels of the Experiential Learning Cycle. This monograph explores the four-year evolution of a 10-month Namibian Training of Trainers (ToT) program from conceptualization through to independent and sustainable implementation. This process involved the careful and collaborative construction of a culturally and contextually grounded training curriculum. Most critically perhaps, it involved the development of effective facilitators and master trainers who were not only competent to conduct the training, but through an expanding, critical, and experientially-based knowledge of the curriculum were empowered to recreate the ToT while respecting and preserving its central integrity.

The Backdrop

Our story begins a few years ago in the recently independent southern African nation of Namibia. The ravages of 23 years of armed struggle against an oppressive regime have created a challenging yet inspiring environment. Long denied access to quality education (or often any education at all) the vast majority of Namibian adults are in need of skills, knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life. Meanwhile another population of Namibians who have spent decades in exile or fighting the barriers of oppression from within, return to the government, public and private sectors, committed to creating a new nation. Many of these individuals, deeply dedicated to this work, have joined or formed Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) aimed at providing support to historically disadvantaged populations. It is against this backdrop that the story of this ToT program unfolds. It would be difficult to appropriately "situate" this learning process without such a brief, albeit superficial, reference to this context. While Lave and Wenger (1991) might argue that much of situated learning is unintentional, this learning process was anything but. To ignore the socio-political context would be to run the risk of perpetuating a disempowering process (Freire, 1985), thus undermining both the historical context and the ultimate educational outcome. The development of this program required careful, critical and continual attention to this unique context.

Enter Experiential Catalysts. The project described herein was designed to reach out to historically disadvantaged populations and support development through adult education and action. As implementing organization, World Education soon realized that the most effective mechanism for accomplishing this goal would be to support existing Namibian NGOs to carry out their missions. The funds provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were used in strategic combinations to provide grants, training and technical assistance to NGOs. Through the creation of partnerships, each NGO worked with World Education to tailor the support package that would best help them to reach their populations with needed services while increasing their ability and capacity to do so. Among the support offerings most frequently accessed was the Training of Trainers (ToT) Program. As Training Officer for World Education, one of the author's central responsibilities was to guide and nurture the development of the ToT program. This responsibility grew into a complex process that shortly revealed itself as having the potential to become a sustainable feature on the landscape of development.

Enter the Central Cast: the Namibian Trainers. To ensure a firm grounding in the socio-political and cultural context of Namibia, the design and development of the Training of Trainers program had to incorporate Namibian trainers.

Group 1 - Previous training workshops conducted by World Education had identified individuals within the NGO community who had an affinity for participatory training. Two of these individuals became part of the training design and facilitation team for the initial ToT. Fully immersed in the experience, they helped to develop a training program that would span ten months and include four two-week intensive residential training courses interspersed with three field application experiences.

Group 2 - The long-term future facilitators and master trainers were actually drawn from the first group of participants in the initial ToT Series. The 10-month series provided numerous opportunities for participants to complete full experiential learning cycles and demonstrate their developing skills and abilities. As a result, identifying potential co-facilitators was a relatively easy task. As participant growth in skills and abilities was clearly apparent to their organizations, it was a relatively simple procedure to secure their service as co-facilitators in subsequent ToTs in exchange for additional mentored skills building. Their initial experience of the ToT from the perspective of participant provided an invaluable reference for facilitators as they began their journey around the next level of experiential learning cycle.

Theoretical Influences on an Emergent Process

As an adult educator, facilitating and contributing to this process was both informed by and confirming of a variety of theoretical frameworks. The challenge set and met was to create a training program that was true to andragogical principles (Knowles, 1980, 1984; Cross, 1980), incorporated the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1971, 1984) both within sessions and throughout the series, and acknowledged within its design central elements of traditional and emerging learning theories that speak to the importance of creating active, constructive, responsive and engaging learning environments (Piaget, 1929; Dewey, 1932; Bruner, 1966; Rogers and Freiberg, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978; Gardner, 1993). In addition to these theoretical frameworks, the author and process facilitator was supported by her own emerging models of collaboration and partnership (Mullinix, 1984, 1998), professional experience, and examples of ToT curricula collaboratively developed and implemented elsewhere in Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Mali). While each theoretical construct and practical activity or product would benefit from in-depth consideration and discussion, this monograph will address but one: The Experiential Learning Cycle.

Expanding the Model: From Cycle to Experiential Learning Spiral

Before embedding this story further into the Experiential Learning Cycle, it is important to specifically propose the shift in imagery that is implicit in the title of this monograph. The orientation and movement around Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle from Concrete Experience (CE) to Reflective Observation (RO) to Abstract Conceptualization (AC) to Active Experimentation (AE) is a stable, workable and important image. What is necessary to ensure its relevance to this situation is to acknowledge both movement and progress within the term cycle. In working with participants to understand this model for learning, it has often been necessary to remind them that it is an Experiential Learning Cycle, and not "Circle"; that the word cycle can evoke images of process and movement as well as return to a starting point. I often use the analogy of a bicycle wheel that begins its rotation at one point and as it returns to its initial orientation has moved through time and space. The end image here is, of course, a spiral. And thus with this tale, it is the image of a series of progressive cycles linked to form a spiral that the reader should keep in mind. To assist in maintaining this imagery, the process described will now be referred to as an Experiential Learning Spiral.

Center Stage - The ToT Series Program. To understand how the facilitators were supported through their developing roles, it is important to have an idea of their primary reference point. The following brief description of the seven stages of the Training of Trainers Series provides a glimpse as to how the overall program integrated the Experiential Learning Spiral into its design.

ToT 1: Introduction to Participatory Training (2 weeks). Participants are provided with the opportunity to acquire and practice skills in facilitating participatory training programs, enhance their abilities to design session plans and associated support materials, and prepare them to conduct training needs assessments [Full cycle of a standard, basic ToT course; theoretical and practical introduction to needs assessment (Concrete Experience through Abstract Conceptualization)].

Field Assignment 1:Conducting Training Needs Assessments (1 week) - Participants work in teams to adapt and implement the training needs assessments developed during ToT 1 and gather information that will guide the curriculum development activities of ToT 2. Field support is provided by ToT Series co-facilitators as needed [Active Experimentation with needs assessment]

ToT 2: Curriculum and Materials Development (2 weeks) - Participants acquire and practice skills in developing training curricula and associated materials [Full Cycle on training curriculum and materials development; CE - AC on pre-testing training curricula]

Field Assignment 2: Pre-Testing Training Curricula (2 weeks) - Participants work in teams to pre-test the training curricula developed during ToT 2 and gather information for ToT 3 modification activities. Field support, observation and feedback is provided by ToT series co-facilitators [Full Cycle on training implementation; AE with pre-testing training curriculum]

ToT 3: Curriculum and Materials Modification (2 weeks) - Participants are provided the opportunity to modify training curricula and materials based on field pre-testing experiences [Full Cycle on curriculum and materials modification; CE - AC on impact evaluation and post-training support]

Field Assignment 3: Assessing Training Impact and Providing Post Training Support (1 week) - Participants explore the needs and provision of follow-up support to their training participants through conducting impact evaluations or provision of technical assistance [AE with impact evaluation and post-training support].

ToT 4: Expanding Training Impact (2 weeks) - Participants evaluate, consolidate and refine training, facilitation and analysis skills and enhance their ability to expand their organizations audience for training and capacity to conduct training programs [Full cycle on ToT Series skills and knowledge consolidation].

The Plot Progresses: Facilitator Development

With the scene set and the spiraling programmatic backdrop in place, it is time to consider how the supportive development of facilitators was woven into this story in order to promote sustainable continuation and expansion of the training program (rather than merely a "happy ending"). While all of these cycles were effectively completed from 1994 to 1998, they will be described in the present tense to bring the reader closer to the action.

Cycle One, Year One - Future Facilitator as Participant. To recap: the ToT Series program is developed and pre-tested with a core team of two Namibian trainers, a Tanzanian expatriate resident World Education Trainer and a U.S.-based American Consultant. Future co-facilitators are participants in the first ToT Series implementation, contributing actively to its evaluation and on-going design [Concrete Experience with the ToT Series - participant perspective].

Cycle Two, Year Two - Facilitator as Facilitator. Four Namibian graduates of the ToT Series, certified and identified as exemplary participatory trainers, are invited to join the facilitation team. Three are able to participate fully and throughout the second implementation of the ToT (two women and one man drawn from two NGOs). The original Namibian trainers do not rejoin the team, but visit on occasion to share and compare thoughts, reactions and experiences. The ex-patriate American consultant is Training Officer-in-residence and serves as master trainer and mentor to the team. As the new team members review sessions, create additional sessions, redesign the program, and prepare to facilitate, they reflect on their experience as participants in the ToT. Training design and analysis techniques and collaborative development models introduced to them during the ToT Series are now applied to the redesign of the Series; deepening, solidifying and clarifying their understanding of both the techniques and model as well as the ToT Series itself. Through progressive implementation and in-depth feedback and preparation sessions, they begin to shift perspectives and develop as effective co-facilitators and members of a ToT facilitation team. Practical experience planning, managing and administering the ToT helps to support team members emerging management perspective. [Shift away from participant perspective; Full Cycle co-facilitator development; CE supports emerging management perspective]

Cycle Three, Year Three - Facilitator as Mentor and Manager. The three original facilitators are joined by two participants from the second ToT Series. The World Education Training Officer and Mentor conducts a Master Trainer Skills Consolidation Workshop for facilitators of the ToT Series. The three co-facilitators from the year two now take on responsibility for mentoring the two new facilitators. In addition to taking on the roles of Master Trainer, they assume full responsibility for financial and logistical management and implementation of the ToT Series. World Education takes a step back from primary implementer to funder, supplying financial support for the ToT Series through a grant to the partner NGOs and targeted technical assistance. The World Education Training Officer transitions from central facilitator to the role of consultant, supporting the facilitators and their organizations in proposal construction, strategic planning, reporting, financial management, marketing, and national accreditation. [new co-facilitators, same as year two; Master Trainers - expand beyond co-facilitator perspective; Full Cycle Master Trainer and management development].

Cycle Four, Year Four - Facilitator as Master Trainer and Implementer. The two partner NGOs undertake implementation of the ToT Series with partial scholarship funds provided by World Education and no technical assistance. Paying and externally funded participants join the mix. A Master Trainers Skills Consolidation Workshop is held for year three co-facilitators, facilitated by the Master Trainers. The World Education Training Officer serves as consultant to this team of three Master Trainers during this workshop. The four co-facilitators from year three, now Master Trainers all, rotate management responsibilities to ensure that each develops knowledge and skills in these areas as well. They continue to plan, pursue accreditation and continue the appropriate adaptation of the ToT Series as World Education support fades out of the scene.

Beyond Cycle One, Years One through Four. Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, a network of participatory trainers that originated with the first ToT Series continues to grow in numbers and geographic scope. Over the course of these same four years, these trainers organize themselves into an official network. They conduct conferences, elect officers, institute membership dues and develop mission statements and by-laws. They manage to solidify this organization to the point where they can take over responsibility for newsletter production, the training library and publications originally supported by World Education.

This parallel organization is indicative of the contagious effect that a strategically supported experiential learning spiral can have. Many of the trainers who completed the ToT Series were not satisfied to remain as certified participatory trainers. The need to challenge themselves, remain connected and inspired, share their skills and support each other was just too great. Together, they began to search out opportunities to develop and challenge their Master Trainer colleagues to create new avenues beyond the co-facilitation of the ToT Series that would allow more trainers to join them at this higher, more professionally challenging level.

In Closing

This monograph has presented the story of the strategic support of individuals through an Experiential Learning Spiral to assume increasing responsibility for the development and implementation of a 10-month Training of Trainers course. This story follows them as they progressed through stages from participants to co-facilitators to master trainers over a four year period. The effect of their grounded experientially based development on their abilities to create a sustainable and responsive program within the context of the recently independent nation of Namibia is a tale worth hearing. It is precisely such strategic approaches that not only create participatory training programs that practice what they preach but support the development of sensitive and talented master trainers. Such master trainers are able to balance flexibility with design integrity to create programs that are appropriately responsive to participant needs while ensuring involvement, true learning and continued application. Maintaining a vibrant, sustainable training program depends less on the ability of facilitators to precisely duplicate the program than it does supporting the development of key facilitators who understand the deep purpose, structure and rationale of the training environment. The mentored support of facilitator development along this Experiential Learning Spiral is itself a carefully scaffolded cognitive apprenticeship (Brown, J.S. et al, 1989). It is only through intensive, collaborative analysis, Socratic dialogue and critical joint reflection born of a creative team process that the in-depth understanding of such a training design emerges. It is at this point that individuals transition from co-facilitators to master trainers. It is at this point that they are ready to move a training program into the future and nurture others to do the same.

As we leave this story, Namibia has well over 100 certified participatory trainers capable of designing and effectively implementing training programs to meet the educational needs of adult learners across a wide range of topics. At least 11 Master Trainers are available to train and mentor others or serve as consultants in the development of responsive training curricula at any level. While long-term continuation of the ToT is likely, it is virtually irrelevant. The existence of an indigenously adapted training program that has so carefully supported the development of a community of participatory adult trainers is a force unto itself. It will not disappear. In a very real sense, it represents not an end; but rather a beginning.

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"W.A.S.H. (WE ALL SPEAK HERE!) AND A LEARNING MODEL"

By Michael J. St. John

Author's notes: An Introduction

This monograph provides the reader with a glimpse into the workings of [1]A Learning Model classroom. A Learning Model has evolved over the past 17 years. This model engages students through carefully designed learning experiences. These experiences create an environment where students take responsibility for their learning; for what they say and do.

A Learning Model classroom allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the material to be learned, create stronger personal meaning with the subject matter, and incorporate this knowledge more readily into their lives. To accomplish this, A Learning Model utilizes strategies that place the center of educational gravity within the student. Ownership, collaboration, and the opportunity to make meaning of their world are the active ingredients of understanding and learning.

The strategies to engage students into their learning, the techniques to design learning experiences, and the methods to assess both student learning and performance have been created, tested, and refined in the classrooms of the co-authors of this approach to learning.

The W.A.S.H. (We All Speak Here) is one of many strategies created and utilized in A Learning Model. This strategy is simple, flexible, and may be used in and with a wide variety of audiences, age groups, and settings. The W.A.S.H. strategy is presented here with instructions that will allow for its facilitation with any gathering of learners.

History, Development and Purpose

The [2]W.A.S.H., as A Learning Model strategy, was originally developed in 1988. It is a strategy that provides a community of learners a common experiential reference point about any given topic. It is a strategy that provides a community of learners (individuals, small groups, or large groups) an avenue to explore, discuss, and discover thoughts and feelings on any idea, issue, concern, concept or misinterpretation that is facing a learning community.

This strategy has gone through a process of change and refinement and several components of the W.A.S.H. were examined and reworked. These components; a) types of questions and their order of delivery; b) the setting, the timing, and the pace; c) the recording of the group's responses and; d) the framing of the questions to elicit the groups prioritized responses; make the W.A.S.H a powerful strategy.

The W.A.S.H.'s power lies in its flexibility and versatility. It is easy to use and may be used in a variety of ways. Some examples are:

- Restructuring the student's [3]internal experiential framework.
- Examining classroom issues.
- As an introductory lecture to an up-coming classroom experience.
- As a summation to a classroom experience.
- To investigate what the students already know.
- Students discovering what they already know.
- To set a course or direction for the next classroom experience.
- As a discussion tool.
- As a way to practice idea-generation.
- To practice decision-making and to develop a rationale for that decision.
- Practicing prioritization
- Practicing recording and reporting

When used properly, the power in the W.A.S.H. allows a learning community to generate (with a little practice) at least one hundred ideas, thoughts, and feelings on any given issue in about 20 minutes. This power is derived from a design that allows a learning community to view the same issue from four different intellectual perspectives in a short period of time. Also, for example, if the W.A.SH. is being used as an introductory lecture for an up-coming classroom experience or activity, the classroom community would have, when the W.A.S.H. ended, a completed hard copy of this introduction that was totally developed by the needs and experiences of that classroom community.

Types of Questions and their Delivery

The essence of a W.A.S.H. is to design a series or sequence of four questions that complete a cycle about a particular issue or idea. The participants, in small groups, will generate a list of as many responses as possible to these questions during a set time limit. This is similar to formal brainstorming and will follow the same rules. In a short period of time (one, maybe two minutes) each group will generate and share many ideas, thoughts, and feelings about the question. Once the list has been generated for that particular question, the group will now prioritize the one, two, or three responses that they feel are the most appropriate responses to the question. These responses are then reported by each group and are recorded on a large sheet of newsprint as a permanent record of the W.A.S.H.

The cycle of W.A.S.H. questions are based on the work on Learning Styles and Brain Hemisphericity by David A. Kolb and Dr. Bernice McCarthy. [4]Kolb's work concludes that people learn through their experiences and that this process is conceived as a four-stage cycle. Kolb's model of experiential learning incorporates Carl Jung's concept of style and type.

Therefore, as humans, we learn by "perceiving and processing" our experiences. These experiences, whether in the classroom environment or in our personal lives requires the learner to establish some concrete feelings about the issue at hand as well as conceptualizing about this issue. These experiences require the learner to reflect on this issue as well as actively experiment with this issue. These concepts; concrete feelings, conceptualization, reflection, and active experimentation are the basis for the theory of experiential learning and its four major learning styles.

In regards to these four major Learning Styles or Types, Dr. McCarthy's [5]4MAT Learning System states that the type one learner's favorite question is "Why?" the type two learners question is "What?" the type three's is "How?" and type four's question is "What if?" Therefore these questions, why? what? how?, and what if? will set the basis for the cycle in the W.A.S.H. questions. It is extremely important that the cycle follows this pattern. This pattern always starts with the "why?" question (Concrete experience), then the "what?" (Reflective observation), the "How?" (Abstract conceptualization), and ends with the "what if?" (Active experimentation).

Crafting the Questions and Prioritizing the Responses

Although the cycle of questions seems simple enough, you should be extremely careful in crafting the questions. One word in the question may very well set the groups off in a direction you did not necessarily intend upon. An example would be if you were having your classroom community examine the issue of the importance of "school". The question "why did we create schools?" will create a different direction than the question "why do we have schools?" Keep in mind that the participants of this W.A.S.H. will be relying on their own concrete experience to generate responses to this first question.

Another example of carefully crafting the questions is evident in the last question of the cycle, the "what if?" This question may be framed in a positive nature or a negative nature depending on the pre-determined direction that you want the group to travel while examining an issue. While WASH-ing the issue of "trust", the question, "what if no one could be trusted?" (Negative) versus "what if you wanted to be trusted?" (Positive) will set that direction.

Another interesting outcome of the last question is that the crafting of the question may change the pronoun the group is using while generating their responses. During the responses on the question "what if no one could be trusted?", the negative view of this issue, the pronoun used by the individuals in the group while generating their list of responses would be "we would." Whereas, on the positive approach, "what if you wanted to be trusted?" the individuals in the group would be using the expression "I would". Crafting the last question in this manner makes the groups list of responses more personal to each member and to the community.

Also, when the group is called upon to prioritize their responses, the prioritization intent is controlled by the adjective used and by the intended direction of the W.A.S.H. When asking to prioritize their list of responses instead of most important or least important you might use:

- Most/least interesting
- Most/least significant
- Most/least unusual
- Most/least helpful, etc.

The setting should be small groups of three to five participants. Each group is given a sheet of composition paper to write down their responses to the pre-designed W.A.S.H. questions. If you feel it is necessary to collect this sheet of paper from each group for an assessment, then all group members names should be clearly written at the top of this paper along with any other pertinent record keeping data.

You will also need a large sheet of newsprint or chart pack paper in order to record the groups prioritized responses. Four different colored markers clearly delineate the responses to the Why, What, How, and What If questions.

Facilitating the W.A.S.H.

Many adjustments were made through reflective practice that focused on how the W.A.S.H. questions were delivered to the groups by the facilitator. It will be easier to demonstrate this facilitation by writing it in script form and providing you with a clear picture of this delivery.

One thing you will notice in the following script is that the phrase, a list of your best responses is never used in the crafting or delivery of the W.A.S.H. question.

When this expression, "your best" is used the participants apply a self-evaluation to their ideas and it severely limits idea-generation by the groups.

Also this script is fairly generic. When facilitating a W.A.S.H., the vocabulary and tone of the script should be appropriately adjusted to meet the needs and ages of the members of any particular learning community or gathering.

This demonstration of facilitating the W.A.S.H questions, the instructions to the participants, and timing used by the facilitator will be featured by using a W.A.S.H. as an introduction to Space Science or as an introduction to the Social Issues of Space Exploration and Funding. Therefore one possible sequence of W.A.S.H. questions might be; "Why do we (humans) explore outer space? What is space exploration? How do we explore outer space? What if you were asked to explore outer space or What if you were asked to support funding for space exploration?" Keep in mind the "What If?" question is going to allow the participants to actively experiment in their minds with the issue at hand.

Once groups are established with the necessary materials, the verbal delivery would be as follows:

"Are all groups ready!" (Check) "I will be asking you and your group a series of questions. I need you and your group to react to these questions by providing a list of responses to the questions. Therefore, each group now needs to select a recorder and reporter." (Check)

"Recorders, your job is to record all responses that the individuals in your group generate. You are not to evaluate any response. You must record it. You may also share your responses if you have any."

"Reporters, you will be called upon to report the responses of your group to the rest of the community."

"If all groups are ready" (check) "Here are the instructions. You and your group will have one minute (time will vary) to come up with a list of as many responses as possible to the following question during this time".

"Ready! Why do we (humans) explore outer space? You have one minute, Go!"

"Time!

At this point in the W.A.S.H. and before the groups prioritize their list, you may feel it is necessary to have the groups count and report the number of responses they generated in one minute. This will allow you to make the point that the group's purpose is to generate, not only quality, appropriate responses, but also quantity, as many responses as possible in a short period of time. This quick inventory from each group on the number of ideas that they have generated per question increases the awareness of the responsibility of the group.

"Now you and your group need to decide from your list of responses the TWO (number may vary) you feel are the most important responses to the question, Why do we explore outer space? You have one minute to make your decisions. Also, on your paper, please circle or underline your two responses, Go!"

"Time! Reporters please, group one."

On a large sheet of newsprint titled Space Exploration, write the word, "WHY" at the top and record all reporter's prioritized responses to the first question. Leave enough room on this sheet of newsprint for the responses of the remaining three questions.

"Second question, but first, please change recorders and change reporters!" (Check)

"Ready!"

Repeat this delivery for the remaining three questions to complete the W.A.S.H.

In Conclusion

Several points should be kept in mind while delivering and recording the W.A.S.H. questions and responses. First, you should notice that the pace of the W.A.S.H. is quite lively. Any more than three minutes (average response time is two minutes) per question and per prioritization diminishes the intent and effect of the W.A.S.H. The pace (time) regulation and management is controlled by the facilitator. Time may increase or decrease without notice depending on the nature of the groups, the questions, the group discussion, and the purpose.

Second, the change in recorders and reporters after each question validates each group member and allows them to feel responsible for the task at hand. When collecting the group's reporting sheets for assessment, the facilitator should be stressing the quality of the document that each group member is writing along with the quantity and quality of the responses each member is generating during the W.A.S.H.

Thirdly, at the end of the W.A.S.H. and considering the topic used in the sample script, space science; the facilitator has a variety of choices for the direction and activity of the learning community. Some of these choices may be:

- An open discussion by the learning community on this topic.
- An activity that encourages research on satellites and rockets.
- An activity that encourages research on locations to explore in our Solar System.

- Debates on funding space exploration.
- An activity that examines the effects of space exploration on human biology, etc.

The W.A.S.H. has provided the members of the learning community a common active experience that will be utilized by the individual as an experiential foundation for future activities.

Finally, the W.A.S.H. strategy provides the individuals of any given learning community the opportunity to discuss with one another in a small group setting any subject matter that is going to be learned, any subject matter that has been learned, and any issues, concerns, or problems facing that learning community. The reports from the small groups to the community at-large allow all members the chance to hear, feel, and think about what this learning community is feeling and thinking about the topics at hand. The W.A.S.H strategy allows the learning community to talk about the thoughts and feelings of their learning community.

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EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION
THE MAIN DISH, NOT JUST A SIDE COURSE

Jeff Jacobs

Mark, a seventh grade Math teacher, has planned a two-week unit on fractions. The first day is to include a fun, hands-on, and interactive lesson involving home made pies. Mark will have Apple Pies lining the desks and will direct the students to slice the pies to help demonstrate fractions and whole parts. The first day arrives and the smell of baked goods welcomes students, who eagerly take their seats with great anticipation of what is to come. As Mark brings forth the knives the learning and fun begin with pies being dissected, divided, and occasionally consumed. Students are able to easily understand the concepts of Ω, °, and a whole. It is a great day in room A-4 for both students and teacher.

The following day students are welcomed by the smell of warm ink as Mark greets them with a mountainous stack of handouts, hot off the school copier machine. All traces of Apple Pie have vanished from the classroom, with the exception of a small piece from the day before secretly stashed by Bill in Jessica's desk. Today is set-aside for serious work. The day will begin with a ten-minute lecture on fractions to be followed by independent seatwork. Mark is well prepared, having enough hand-outs to keep even the most ambitious fraction whiz busy into next month. Students work quietly and earnestly at their desks, some with their stomachs turned in knots, struggling with fractions and hoping for more Apple Pie days.

Setting the Table

Of the two days described above, which day would you prefer to be a student in Mark's classroom? What factors would you consider in making this decision? As an educator, which lesson would you prefer to deliver? Do you feel as though you could develop and implement a day, week, unit, semester, or school year of experiential curriculum? Does utilizing Experiential Education simply entail designing lessons that provide opportunities for students to be active? Where would you turn if you were interested in serving a steady diet of Experiential Education?

Advantages of Utilizing Experiential Education in the Classroom.

Too often students are becoming disinterested with school. The standard approach of lecturing at students, followed by textbook readings and homework assignments is not actively engaging students in the learning process. Students can have a hard time making connections between school work and real life application. Students do not understand the significance of the content that is being taught. Without improvements that allow for almost immediate applicability, students begin to call into question the relevance of their time spent at school.

The use of experiential education in the classroom can help students transfer learning to areas beyond the four walls of their classroom. Experiential education intentionally provides opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the learning process. Students move from being recipients of information to seekers of knowledge. The classroom can be transformed from a sterile and passive environment to an arena for exploration, discovery, and excitement. The relationship between teachers and students often changes from one of teacher and learner to a partnership of lifelong learners and co-conspirators. Educators shift away from being instructors dispensing facts to facilitators allowing students to learn from academically focused experiences. Students are offered more choices within their learning experience. These choices can increase a student's sense of ownership and make them a stakeholder in their own education. The characteristics and advantages of experiential education not only enhance student learning, but also provide educators with a more rewarding and enriching teaching experience.

Not Just a Side Dish

Experiential Education is often viewed as an enhancement to more didactic educational approaches. Educators use experiential lessons and initiatives to foster excitement in students or to take a break from the daily grind of handouts, lectures, and assignments. Rarely is experiential education seen as a central approach to learning. Many veteran teachers can not comprehend a setting where students work experientially throughout an entire school year mastering concepts, ideas, and objectives. Yet, other teachers would welcome the opportunity to establish an experiential curriculum, but do not have the training, background, knowledge, or bag-of-tricks to do so. Too often, as with Mark in the scenario described above, Experiential Education is seen as a side dish and not the main course.

A common misconception of Experiential Education is that in order for something to be experiential it must include high adventure, with participants scaling rock faces, navigating white water, or utilizing survival skills in the backcountry. For the purpose of this writing, experiential education will be defined as a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences' (AEE). This process does not require, nor suggest, that high adventure needs to serve as the direct experience.

A second misunderstanding regarding Experiential Education is that by simply designing lessons that are active one has successfully implemented Experiential Education. Serving Experiential Education as the main dish involves the intentional use of "experiences structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results" (AEE). Just as the reading of a story would be incomplete without questions for review, discussion, exploration, and evaluation, an experience would be incomplete without opportunities for processing, generalizing, and applying. One of the guiding principles for Experiential Education practice states that "Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis" (AEE).

Utilizing an experiential or adventure-based curriculum does not mandate that the entire learning process involves physical activity. Just as teacher-centered curriculums are often supplemented with hands-on experiences, so too can experiential lessons be enhanced with more didactic approaches. An example of how this collaboration can take place is the use of Jim Schoel and Mike Stratton's Gold Nuggets, Readings for Experiential Education, as a precursor for or capstone to adventuresome initiatives and lessons. In this instance, a carefully chosen reading can be woven into the fabric of an experiential lesson and provide valuable insights and clarification.

Why is experiential education not more prevalent?

Current teacher preparation programs rarely include coursework considering experiential education. The few universities and colleges that do offer experiential education programs usually do so within the fields of recreation and outdoor leadership, rather than education. The omission of experiential education from teacher preparation programs could be due to a number of factors including having to compete with more "traditional" areas of study such as reading and writing in the content area and educational psychology. Experiential education is not only missing from the course offerings, but is also left out completely of most methods courses. Unfortunately, experiential education has yet to establish itself in many academic circles as a relevant and important avenue for delivering curriculum and content to students.

In addition, many teachers teach from their own experiences. Very few teachers had the opportunity to learn and discover in an experiential environment as students. Just as parenting experts have been saying for years, "You are likely to parent as you were parented", it also can be said that teachers are most likely to teach as they have been taught. Therefore it becomes important to not only provide students with experiential education, but also to create opportunities for administrators and teachers to "experience" experiential education. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to embrace experiential education as a method for delivering curriculum if they have not encountered the benefits, advantages, and effectiveness of experiential education first hand.

How can experiential education become more prevalent?

Even though there are few universities and colleges offering experiential education courses to future educators, more and more books and resource guides are being published targeting classroom and school use of experiential and adventure curriculums. Some publications that are available to teachers include; Adventure in the Classroom, by Mary Henton, Creating Classroom Communities, by Joyce Hankey & Peggy Walker Stevens, Into the Classroom, by Mitchell Sakofs & George P. Armstrong, and a Guide for Planning a Learning Expedition by Meg Campbell, Amy Mednick, & Leah Rugen (Project Adventure, Adventure Education Publications, 1999). These publications and others are helping to fill the void for educators that are searching for ways to expand their bag of tricks and hoping to bring experiential education into the classroom. Readers can choose from publications that simply list initiatives and lessons that have proven effective in the classroom to works that help teachers plan, design, create, and implement experiential curriculums.

In addition to purchasing publications, teachers can attend trainings, conferences, and workshops. Educators can turn to AEE's web site, www.aee.org, as a launching point for discovering valuable resource information. Several organizations and associations worldwide offer training and enrichment opportunities for educators. Training programs generally range in length from a day to a full week. Topics typically covered include; Building Community within the Classroom, Creating a Cooperative Spirit, Encouraging 100% Participation, Practical Problem Solving, Designing Experiential Lessons, Teaching Academic Content through Adventure/Experiential Activities, and Developing Units that utilize the Experiential Learning Cycle that can be implemented in the classroom. Workshops and Trainings are becoming more desirable to teachers and educators as attendees are able to gain valuable C.E.U. s (Continuing Education Units) or Graduate Credit. In addition, many school districts are making these opportunities more accessible by bringing trainers and programs to the school district during Inservice and Staff Development Days.

Summary

Experiential Education is not a new concept or methodology. Ever since John Dewey published Experience & Education in 1938 educators have been examining the role that experience can play in the learning process (Dewey, 1938). However, experiential education has most often been viewed as an enhancement to more traditional methods of delivering curriculum. Rarely have teachers and administrators taken the challenge of creating and adopting a predominantly experiential approach to learning. The opportunities for utilizing experiential education are limited by colleges and universities that seldom offer training and coursework for future teachers. In addition, most current teachers were students in classrooms with more teacher-centered learning approaches and therefore replicate their prior experience, rather than experiential methods.

With the assistance of recent publications and an increasing number of trainings and workshops, teachers can begin to incorporate experiential education as a core component of their teaching. Experiential lessons no longer need to be reserved for only occasional usage. Teachers will need to take an active role in seeking out training, materials, and resources to help them move experiential education from being just a side dish to more of a main course. However, the rewards of this effort will be evident in the classroom as students take more ownership over their own learning and are able to make connections between educational experiences and lifelong learning. The use of experiential education in the classroom will challenge students and educators to reach their greatest potential.

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UNSCREWING YOURSELF:
ONE APPROACH TO ANGER MANAGEMENT GROUPWORK WITH ADOLESCENTS

Andy Greif

Many students enrolled at the Windham REAL (Regional Educational Alternative Learning) School dive in nanoseconds into a cycle in which their aggressive responses to angry feelings create increasingly negative consequences. They "screw" themselves by acting out in response to feeling angry, putting in motion a cycle of escalating angry thoughts, overwhelming somatic reactions, and destructive behaviors. A typical "screwing yourself" scenario looks something like this:

Student: makes a disparaging comment to another student during a class meeting.
Teacher: "That's a 'reminder' (one point on the behavior management system)."
Student: "I didn't do anything, he is an idiot anyway."
Teacher: "Quiet—all you got was one reminder—leave it at that."
Student: "F___ you!"
Teacher: "That is another reminder—take a time out." (Second reminder means 10 minutes must be made up during the lunch break and no store visit for snack food.)
Student: "F____ YOU, you _____!—turns over desk and slams classroom door.
Teacher: "You have detention for 30 minutes after school today."
Student: "F___ that!"—walks out of school for the day (resulting in in-school reflection process, isolation from his classmates for one to three days).

In the Unscrewing Yourself Anger Management Group, each student was invited to develop self-awareness of his/her trigger thoughts, body responses, and underlying feelings congruent with scenarios such as the one outlined above. This groupwork focused on the pre-contemplative stage of change related to anger management. Refer to Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente (1994) for a detailed description of their stage-based change model. Students in the group were not considering, nor were very motivated, about the possibility of understanding or changing their anger response style. They were ambivalent (contemplative stage of change) about changing their aggressive behaviors. This anger management groupwork attempted to influence the participants to contemplate change. It did not directly emphasize and practice the skills necessary for behavioral change (preparation and action stages of change).

The basic premise of the group was that it is necessary for a student to understand his/her relationship with anger to be able to contemplate changing his/her behaviors. Once this happens, a student may be ready to progress further by creating behavior change through cognitive restructuring, relaxation classes, conflict resolution strategies, communication skills, and environmental changes (preparation and action stages of change). Students were given the opportunity to increase their self-knowledge through activities with foundations in the ideas and theories of McKay, Rogers, and McKay (1989), Simmer (1998), Weisinger (1995), Westmoreland (1995), and Winogran, Van Dieten, and Gauza (1999). You may request from the author the handouts and activity worksheets that are beyond the publication scope of this monograph (321 Cole Road, Kennebunk, Maine 04043 or e-mail at agreif@cybertours.com.).

Background Information

Most students at the REAL School have Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) that outline objectives directed toward anger management and/or conflict resolution issues. The students are, generally, not eager to examine their addictive anger behaviors. During the 1998-99 school year, the REAL School staff members decided to work on these objectives through groupwork, as well as already existing individual counseling interventions and an in-school reflection (suspension) process.

The REAL School serves 12 to 19 year-old students who have not been successful in the mainstream public education environment, most commonly due to inappropriate school behavior. The students are placed in teams of no more than 14, with two teachers and an educational technician. The ideas in this monograph were used with two high school age teams (ninth to twelfth grades) and one middle school-age team (seventh to ninth grades).

The groups typically met once a week for an hour to an hour and a half. Anywhere from six to 10 students attended with two to three teachers choosing to be involved as participants. Each team had a behavioral management plan, which was monitored by the teachers and/or the facilitator (author and school counselor). The groups were run during the time period before lunch or the last period of the school day. No pre-group process was conducted to determine who was ready for this groupwork. Everyone who showed up at school for the day was included.

Well articulated debriefing and reflection ideas are missing from the following descriptions of activities. Structured reflections were typically omitted from each of the sessions due to the inherent reflective nature of the activities, the effort required to maintain student engagement and behavioral control, and session time constraints. As with most groups, some students clearly recognized individual connections and learnings through active participation, others drifted in and out of attention, and for others the group appeared to be a waste of time. Generally, building self-reflection opportunities into activities has worked best for the students served at the Windham REAL School.

Anger Management Themes

The content of each anger management group session focused on themes related to the students relationship with anger. These sessions were presented in various sequences. Activities that have bombed with one group have gelled with another. As with much adolescent work, one may never know what impact this work will have on behavior change as related to anger responses with the participating students.

Anger Record Log—What is really going on with my anger?

Several weeks prior to the start of each anger management group each student filled in an Anger Record Log. Daily compilation of the logs continued for the duration of each anger group. The Anger Record Logs included information specific to:

- date and time,
- what happened?
- thoughts and beliefs about what happened,
- feelings other than anger—underlying feelings,
- intensity of angry feelings,
- actions in response to what happened, and
- self-grading on anger management.

Each student chose whether or not to keep information documented in their log confidential. They were encouraged to record anything along the continuum from mildly to intensely angry. They could limit information to just events occurring in the school setting and/or include events from other domains in their lives.

Simmer (1999) encourages participants to act as scientists in the recording and analysis of their anger information. He believes that doing so acts as an intervention in and of itself. This recording process fits within the context of stage-based change. Self-awareness is the primary task during the pre-contemplative stage.

An additional reason for data recording was that students could use the information to make personal connections during subsequent theme-based sessions. In reality, only one of the teams set aside time on a daily basis for their students to complete their logs and to help them understand what data was being requested. The students in the high school team that completed the logs generally didn't do so with integrity—"I wasn't angry at all today!" was a typical entry. In addition, after a review of several completed logs, it was clear that many students did not have an accurate understanding of what each data column meant, until the corresponding session was facilitated. The recording and use of anger records needs more work to become an effective tool. To facilitate this happening, both the teaching staff and students must be open to coaching.

Purpose of Anger – What is the purpose of my anger?

During this session, students learned that the purpose of anger is to indicate that something is wrong. They related to the traffic light warning signal symbolized by yellow or red flashing lights. Once people realize something is wrong they need to create change the flight or fight response surfaces. The Greek symbol for change—the Delta—was described to introduce this concept. The typical things that trigger the anger signal and need for change are primary feelings related to being neglected (abandoned, deprived, ignored, or left out) or violated in some fashion (teased, disrespected, humiliated, or abused) (Westmoreland, 1995).

To further invite the students to understand the purpose of anger they participated in a Charade Relay Race and completed an Anger Balance Sheet (Simmer, 1998). The Charade Relay Race involved acting out various flight or fight responses to angry feelings, such as silence, swearing, complaining, change in voice tone, smoking cigarettes, and sending someone flowers. After the race they brainstormed additional ways they create change when something is wrong. Referring to their Anger Record Logs helped add to the list of flight or fight responses. Next, they recorded their typical anger response behaviors on an Anger Balance Sheet and included their perceived benefits and costs for each form of anger expression. Each student was asked to re-examine their Anger Balance Sheet to consider whether each benefit is actually a short-term benefit and a long-term cost (Winogron, Van Dieten, and Gauz, 1999).

Anger Assessment Inventory—Do I have a problem with my anger?

As a compliment to the previous session, the students were asked to self-assess whether or not they have a problem with their anger response style. They scaled on bar graphs their general anger style according to the six criteria and associated continuum listed below:

Anger Trigger – instantaneous reaction (short fuse) to a long reaction time (long fuse)

Anger Intensity – calm demeanor to emotionally abusive speech and body posture.

Anger Retention – seconds to days, weeks, and beyond.

Anger Frequency – seldom to continuously angry.

Aggression – non-confrontational to jail time for assault or murder.

Relationships – solid and secure to many lost friends or family members.

A facilitator learning from this activity was that each student must be guided to determine his/her personal baseline for each criterion before completing the self-assessment. In addition, students must be invited to consider the contrasts between what they consider normal anger responses and what mainstream society considers healthy anger responses related to each of the six criteria.

Anger Words Intensity—What is my range of angry feelings?

As a foundation reference tool for several of the sessions, the students were invited to create a group Anger Intensity Thermometer. Directions for this activity are as follows:

Have the group members brainstorm a list of synonyms for the emotion anger to add to a list previously generated by the facilitator.

Ask them to write all the words on individual index cards, spread them out on the floor, and select two per person.

Consider specifying that each student choose words that reflect a range in intensity of anger.

As a compliment to their selected words, have them select images from a compilation of weather patterns and landforms (ie. volcanoes, tornadoes, lightning, glaciers) that visually describe each of the words they have chosen.

Once everyone has selected their words and corresponding images, have them show their selections, add any comments, and place them on a ten-foot outline of a thermometer. The top of the thermometer signifies the most intense anger. The bottom represents low intensity anger.

A student may reposition any other words and images that are on the thermometer at his/her turn.

After several rounds, attach the words and images with tape in the sequence agreed upon and secure the thermometer on a wall.

After completion of the Anger Thermometer, invite the students to distinguish between words that represent the emotion anger and ones that are aggressive behaviors. Students have tended to believe that actions are feelings. For example, they have included the word "killing" on their thermometer.

Emphasize the need to manage anger in the lower levels of the anger thermometer, toward a result of increasing the ability to use anger productively, remain emotionally and physically safe, and maintain healthy relationships. In other words, people are able to think and make healthy decisions when their emotional state is relatively calm. Refer back to the benefit side of the previously generated Anger Balance Sheets. Emotional states higher on the anger thermometer result in making poor flight and fight decisions and staying on the cost side of the Anger Balance Sheet.

This session can be augmented with skin temperature sensors called Biodots (Whole Person Associates: 800-247-6789). When a person is tense or anxious their skin temperature is low, relative to when they are relaxed. Biodots can show this progressive temperature change during a relaxation activity.

Tension Mind and Body Cues—Am I getting angry?

The three components to an anger feedback loop are angry thoughts (hot cognitions/trigger beliefs), angry actions (behaviors/responses), and anger arousal (mind/body tension cues) (Weisinger, 1985). As these components interact, they feed one another resulting in an increased intensity of aggressive behaviors. Students have needed help to recognize that their thought attributions and physiological cues are springboards to this feedback loop. The opportunity to choose to stay at a low level on their Anger Intensity Thermometer is brief. With help, they can recognize the signal(s) that something is wrong. They can be guided to change their pattern of escalating anger arousal.

A list was compiled of mind/body cues that signal something is wrong with input from staff and students. The inventory was broken down into thoughts and actions; muscle responses and body actions; and breathing, heart rate, and skin responses. Included on this inventory were blank cartoon drawings of the brain, muscle, vascular, and respiratory systems. The activity using this inventory is as follows:

The students check-off the cues that they recognize in themselves and add others not listed.

The students highlight, with a yellow marker, several cues that surface when angry feelings begin (low on the Anger Thermometer).

Each person shares his/her low level cues.

They ask for classmates and teachers to articulate any cues that they have not personally recognized (for readers familiar with the Johari Window this would be the blind window - Johnson, 1993).

As a way to have fun, concretize this information, and increase self-awareness of classmates' anger cues play King Frog (Kreidler & Furlong, 1995):

While sitting in a circle each person shares a gesture and/or sound that symbolizes one of their low level anger cues followed by everyone imitating the gesture.

The facilitator is the King Frog who starts the game by acting his/her gesture, immediately followed by someone else's gesture.

The person recognized by the King Frog must repeat their gesture and then perform another person's gesture.

This sequence continues until someone makes a mistake (ie. doesn't respond when their gesture is made). As the consequence they must move to the seat to the right of the King Frog and everyone else shifts over one seat to the right. Each gesture stays with its respective seat in the circle and doesn't move with its originator.

The person that made the mistake starts the action with their new gesture and someone else's gesture. The activity continues until the group decides to stop.

The students enjoy pointing out each others' and the teacher's anger cues during the following school days. Hopefully, this leads to increased self-awareness and stopping the escalation of angry thoughts, body arousal, and aggressive reactions.

Hot Cognitions Assessment - What are my trigger thoughts?

Exploring triggers (a.k.a. buttons and hot cognitions) for each person adds to his/her understanding of their anger feedback loop. Three ways to surface these triggers are: 1) examining the thoughts and beliefs section of student Anger Record Logs; 2) examining an inventory of triggers created by McKay, Rogers, and McKay (1989); and 3) finishing sentence fragments. McKay, et. al. (1989) categorize triggers into:

- verbal behaviors,
- nonverbal sounds,
- voice quality, tone, and volume,
- gestures using hands and arms,
- facial expressions,
- body movements.

A complete inventory of the corresponding triggers can be found on the Internet at HYPERLINK http://www.alzwell.com/Clues.html www.alzwell.com/Clues.html. Examples of the sentence fragments used to surface triggers are:

- I don't like it when . . .
- I feel hurt when . . .
- I am tired of . . .
- I resent . . .
- I hate it when . . .
- I'm fed up with . . .
- I want . . .
- I feel disappointed when . . .
- I feel sad when . . .
- I don't understand when . . . (source unknown).

Something more engaging than what is described above may be to create a group generated, Gallery of Triggers. This activity involves:

Giving each student a pack of Post-its and asking them to record each of their triggers on separate Post-its.

Stick the Post-its on a wall.

Have the students move the Post-its into combinations of similar themes.

Create a title for each theme. The titles may be posted on the previously created Anger Intensity Thermometer.

Exploring triggers on the Anger Thermometer may help students understand which triggers result in a mild anger feedback loop and which develop into an inferno. They could deepen their awareness of their anger response by analyzing each of their triggers through the Anger Assessment Inventory process and/or the Anger Balance Sheet.

Discussing hot cognitions may be followed by introducing the concept of alternative cool cognitions for the same precipitating event. An example would be the blind man in the elevator story (source unknown). A man taps you on the back of your leg while riding in an elevator. A person with a tendency to respond with a hot cognition would think that the man was intentionally irritating them. An alternative cool cognition would be that the man is just using his cane as his eyes.

A warm-up activity used to begin recognizing personal triggers has been Secret Agent-Guardian Angel (source unknown). The set-up for Guardian Angel and Secret Agent involves:

Each person anonymously selects another person to be their Secret Agent—the person who knows their buttons intimately and routinely tries to trigger their anger.

Select another person to be a Guardian Angel—the person who helps him/her to remain calm under stress. In order to lessen the possibility of scapegoating, ask students to think of someone outside of the school setting for each role. The two individuals in the group selected are representations of the real Secret Agent and Guardian Angel.

The task of the activity is for everyone to walk around the designated space trying to keep their Guardian Angel in between them and their Secret Agent. Consider making the space smaller and smaller and changing the pace of the walking as the action proceeds. Tell the students to remember not to consciously reveal the identity of their Secret Agent and Guardian Angel.

After the action and depending on the ability of the group members to be emotionally safe, ask them to share who they see as their Secret Agents in the team and how they push their buttons. Subsequently, describe their Guardian Angels and how they coach them to remain calm.

Primary Feelings—What's really going on?

During this session refer back to the discussion concerning the purpose of anger in which students were neglected or violated in some manner something is wrong. Describe anger as being a surface or secondary feeling. The feelings related to neglect or to a violation are the underlying or primary feelings. A useful image is that of an iceberg. The tip that you see is your anger and the core underlying feelings are those represented by the massive part of the iceberg below the ocean surface.

The students connected more with the image of a volcano. Volcanoes hold in the stress of accumulating magma, steam, and gas just as people hold in tension and anxiety. The stress each of us holds in are the insults that connect to our primary feelings. With a volcano anything may occur to relieve stress from a cataclysmic eruption to sporadic venting of contained pressure. This relief in stress from a volcano is parallel to the anger people release in varying levels of intensity. Once stress is relieved in some manner the process (cycle) of stress build-up and release continues for both the volcano and people. One goal of a geologist is to determine what is forming below the surface of a volcano just as determining primary feelings is one goal of anger management work.

To date, the only activities used to help students recognize various primary feelings were charades and an examination of each student's Anger Record Log. Charades of various underlying feelings was aided by the use of Feelings Marketplace Cards (Project Adventure Inc.). After the charades activity, each student selected a primary feeling card that particularly resonated with him/her and shared from the heart anything of his/her choosing concerning the thoughts behind the feeling. The primary feelings words pulled from the Feelings Marketplace Cards set were: bored, tired, caged, trapped, mixed up, cornered, worried, helpless, defeated, guilty, dumped on, tense, picked on, flustered, bypassed, nervous, anxious, abandoned, ignored, overwhelmed, pressured, stupid, threatened, vulnerable, left out, stuck, cheated, unsupported, envious, and confused.

Anger Styles Assessment—What does my anger look like?

Simmer (1998) describes five styles of anger in the context of the "vicious circle of addiction to power." The styles are:

- Mad About You—loss of intimacy,
- Rage for Order—disorder and chaos appears,
- Shame-Guilt Pendulum—submission to a partner,
- Breaking Out—freedom is restricted,
- Avoiding Anger – anger is stuffed and denied.

As in an addiction cycle, a person feels some insult related to a primary feeling (pain, boredom, powerlessness) followed by an addictive behavior which provides short term relief from the primary feeling. Then, as Simmer (1998) describes, recoil happens in which a long-term negative consequence occurs—"the kick in the teeth." In the adolescent anger groups use the phrase "screwing yourself" rather than recoil. The cycle continues from discomfort, to addictive behavior, to short-term relief, to long-term negative consequence.

Refer to the scenario in the introduction to this monograph. The student displayed the breaking out style in which his responses to the teacher resulted in more and more freedoms being revoked. The possible long-term negative consequence may have been closer monitoring by the teacher. As with all the other sessions keep emphasizing that self-awareness of all the components of an anger feedback loop may result in reducing the likelihood of screwing yourself. The anger styles work enhances each student's understanding of his/her triggers and aggressive actions.

Prior to the session each student completed the Anger Styles Questionnaire created by Simmer (1998) to determine their preferred anger styles. During the session several staff members role-played typical student-based scenarios depicting each of the five anger styles. The role plays showed the vicious circle of screwing yourself. Subsequently, each student guessed his/her primary anger styles and those of each of their classmates.

Relaxation Methods—How can I let off steam?

Several activities were designed to offer options for relieving stress. Prior to these activities the purpose of relaxation, experience characteristics necessary for relaxation, and when to use relaxation methods were introduced. Weisinger (1985) describes relaxation as a "protective mechanism to counter the harmful physical and mental effects of anger." Relaxation techniques may help someone notice tension in their mind and body and choose to intervene to reduce stress. To have a beneficial relaxation experience one must create an environment of silence, solitude, and stillness (Kieve Leadership Decisions Institute: Nobleboro, Maine). To accomplish the purpose of relaxation the techniques that work for a person should be used:

- every day,
- whenever you feel tense or irritable,
- when someone expresses anger toward you, and
- when you anticipate an anger provoking situation (Weisinger, 1985).

Two sessions were devoted to the relaxation response. One was congruent with a focus on the self-awareness task during the pre-contemplative stage of change. Each team member was asked to communicate what he/she does to relax. The subsequent session shifted into the preparation stage of change. The students were introduced to several relaxation methods. These included diaphragmatic breathing, guided muscle tension and relaxation, and a drawing meditation. Descriptions of these activities are beyond the pre-contemplative stage focus of this monograph, but can be found in Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 1995.

During the self-awareness session the students selected a balloon and a permanent magic marker. They were instructed to blow up their balloon and hold the air in the balloon without tying a knot. They wrote the activities they use to relieve stress on their balloons. While holding the air in their balloons, students shared their stress relievers. During this sharing time, there were many distractions, such as balloons flying around the room exploding into fragments, and various balloon noises, lending humor to the activity. To date, this author has not invited the students to consider the connections between the balloon activity and stress build-up and relief.

Many of the things that students related that they do to relax cannot be done at school, and many are not beneficial ways to relax. The initial focus was on asking students to recognize which relaxation activities can be used during school hours (such as, listening to music, chewing gum, riding bikes, and walking). In future groups, it may be useful to creatively challenge students' perceptions about relaxing through activities such as smashing things, listening to rap music with violent content, playing aggressive video games, and smoking cigarettes and marijuana.

Miscellaneous Musing

The two high school age groups described in this monograph began with an expressive art activity during the first session. The students were given 24" X 24" drawing paper and a diverse pallet of tempera paints. They were invited to create an art response related to their relationship with anger. A title for each creation was added. Their relationship with anger was described as including anything related to work, school, family, legal issues, body response, thoughts, experiences, cultural influences, friends, feelings, and whatever. Each student was invited to show and share any stories related to their expressive art response.

In hindsight, the general reactions of the students revealed that this activity was too self-revealing and abstract during the start of this anger management groupwork. This may have been the ideal activity for the closing phase of the group to revisit the themes explored during each session and create a visual anchor for personal learnings.

Summary

In this short monograph activities are described to engage adolescent students into becoming more aware of their relationship with anger. The underpinning of this groupwork focuses on activities at a pre-contemplative stage of change. The group invites students to develop self-awareness of the components of their anger feedback loops. Each person's loop includes a precipitating event which begins the interaction of one's actions, thoughts, and body arousal patterns. Through this anger management work the author hopes that participants will be encouraged to develop the skills necessary to end their addictive cycles of extreme anger and aggression.

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WHAT IS AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNER?

Lynn M. Donahue

Introduction

The instructor told us to take a place on the benches and use the circular pillows to help sit in a way that comfortably aligns the body. Next she demonstrated the basic meditation position, in which one [sic] sits cross legged and cups their [sic] hands with thumbs touching each other at belly level. This body position helps [one to find center].

Upon entering the studio, I saw ballet bars connected to the walls to aid the dancers [sic] in warming up. Warm-up helps the dancer find his or her [sic] center. [The instructor] also showed us that in the proper first position [the arms] are curved round like a bowl and the hands rest gently in front of the belly.

In all meditative practices, whether [they take place] in a Zen Center or a dance studio, the removal of distractions, the placement of purposeful objects, and the implementation of commitment nurtures growth in body and mind.

—Journal entry by student of Art and Contemplative Practice: Through the Lens of Gender and Culture

Most of the class agreed that the experience with meditation at the Rochester Zen Center was an important part of their semester-long, "contemplative" journey, exploring the way artists have looked at spiritual practices. During an interview with *Annie author of the above journal entry, she shared her wonderment in discovering the similarities of the hand positions between Zen meditative practices, the art of ballet and Christian prayer. In class the next day, the group briefly explored the similarities between such disparate cultures. Further reflection on the role of dance as a contemplative practice, and on a dance number she had choreographed, became the focus of this students final research project.

This monograph will serve as a contemplative journey as well - an exploration of a question for experiential educators who teach at the college level. That is, in courses that are defined as experiential, how are students learning and are they learning in ways that could be defined as experiential? The purpose of this monograph, then, is to challenge readers to explore this question. To accomplish this purpose, two rationales will be given as to why this question is important, two students stories will be presented and analyzed, experiential learning will be defined and suggestions for next steps will be presented.

The course referenced above, Art and Contemplative Practice: Through the Lens of Gender and Culture, served as one of two sites at which to conduct dissertation research. It connected real life experience with the theoretical and conceptual foundations of that experience, a central component of experiential learning. Through forty-two hours of course observation, twenty-eight one-on-one interviews, a focus group and analysis of journal and other written assignments, each of the students unique personalities, experiences and perceptions emerged. As with Annie, each student had a story to tell of how they learned and what they experienced. From each of these stories, then, it will be possible to determine the subjective realities of the students pertaining to how they learn and if they learn in ways that can be described as experiential.

Shifting From Instruction to Teaching

The question of how students are learning in experiential courses is important because of a relatively recent change in focus from teaching to learning within the college classroom. Congruent with this shift in thinking about teaching and learning at the college level, there needs to be more of a balanced discourse that emphasizes the subtle nuances and complexities of learning within any discussion of teaching (Barr and Tagg 1995; Love and Love 1995; Travis 1995 as stated in Stage, Muller, Kinzie and Simmons, 1998). University of Rochester's "Quest" courses, of which Art and Contemplative Practice: Through the Lens of Gender and Culture is one, are good examples of learning-centered courses because of their focus on the student as researcher and explorer. Therefore, this course will enable me to answer a timely question that focuses not just on teaching within an experiential course, but on the learning that evolves from it.

Students' Perceptions of Active Learning

There is a second reason why it is important to know how students are learning. Within any experiential situation, the incorporation of experiential learning strategies does not guarantee that experiential learning will occur. Experiential learning is more than "active", physsical involvement (Anthony, 1996). What goes on in a student's mind points to the experiential nature of a learning situation as much as, or more than, that which can be observed. Therefore, it is vital that we assess how students are learning. For example, during an interview, Alissa's perceptions of the way she viewed herself as learning was clarified.

> [T]here has been a shift in the way that I learn, or the way that I look at things now just because I feel a lot more open minded about things and a lot more apt to search for connections between things that are not just from my point of view. . . . I tend to look at things from a more universal standpoint . . . It's like a new way of thinking about something, which I think is different than most classes.

By stating that she is more "apt to search for connections between things that are not just from [her] point of view", Alissa described a change in her learning towards a more active mode. This change may have been observed in class through her increased dialogue on multiple perspectives of an issue. But it is only by asking the student herself that we will we get a complete picture of her perspective.

In summary, while an experiential classroom must incorporate appropriate teaching methodologies and curricular components, students need to ultimately see themselves in the role of active learner and inquirer, or they may remain in the passive role, unable to be true inquirers.

Two Student's Stories.

At the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, students were greeted by the curator of a traveling exhibit called "Faith and Practice: Religious Objects from Diverse Traditions." The focus of the exhibit was to "reverence the reverence of others"; to study works of art from five of the world's religious traditions. On the left wall of the room hung the Genzu Mandala: Mandala of the Womb World. Although difficult to describe, this painting consisted of a ring of circles, one inside another, filled with hundreds of Buddha figures in a variety of postures, drawn in exquisite detail. We were informed that those practicing the teachings of Japanese Buddhism would begin their meditations by working from the center outward, progressively absorbing an understanding of the sect through an examination of each level. In her journal, Alissa wrote what viewing this Mandala meant to her.

> The intricacy of the formal elements and the inherent order within the seemingly disorganized clutter of shapes were unlike anything I have seen. The longer I spent looking at the shapes and images, first as individuals and then as a part of the whole, the more details became clear to me. I began to see how effective this piece would be as a focusing aid for meditation. [I was amazed] at the concentration it must have taken to to memorize all the different symbolic body and hand positions. Seeing this beautiful and mysterious drawing mounted on an austere, white museum wall made me crave the

> opportunity to see it in its intended setting. I envisioned it hanging on the stone wall of a candle light Buddhist monastery, high in the mountains, somewhere in the East. That brief vision encapsulates my fascination with art, especially the art of other times or other countries.

This student's story addressed how this student learned as a result of her experience with the Mandala. It also encapsulated well the many levels of experiential learning that took place for her. The ability to view this Mandala a few inches from where it was displayed resulted in a more powerful experience than either a textbook or a verbal description could have done. Alissa demonstrated a high level of *engagement* as evidenced by her "fascination" with the object and her intellectual musings on the religious purpose of this object. She *reflected* on the meaning this Mandala held for the Buddhist monks, both in her journal and later during class. Lastly, this student *related* the viewing of this Mandala both to how it is practiced as well as to her own fascination with art and cultures of a different time and place. This journal entry, although only a snippet of one students experience, presents a point of view that begins to answer the question of how students learned in this course and if they learned in ways that could be defined as experiential. Beth's experience in the class was quite different from either Annie's or Alissa's. While Beth's presence in the course was quiet, unassuming, and at times very "unexperiential", it wasn't until the interview that it became apparent how she learned and whether she learned in experiential ways. Although Beth indicated her receptivity to learning in more traditional modes based on past experiences, she also talked about a way of learning experientially that seemed positive for her.

> Probably I guess the process [for me] is just reading the material and thinking about it. I tend not to talk that much in class, but it's not always the case that I am in outer space or anything. I tend to work through problems more through listening to other people's comments and other people's point of views and thinking about them that way rather than always throwing mine out there. I tend to be a pretty active listener, if that makes any sense.

The important part of this paragraph is her self-definition as an "active listener". Although Beth's mode of experiential learning is more unassuming than others, perhaps it should not be discounted as a valid way of learning experientially. It may be apparent from their enthusiastic participation in class that Alissa and Annie learn in a fully engaged and reflective way. Yet, Beth's more silent intellectual musings during class discussions may demonstrate engaged or reflective learning at a similar level.

> An astrologer once told me that my past was a bag full of groceries that had ripped and spilled all over the planet. It was my task in this life to pick up the

> groceries. If I felt drawn to a place, if the longing persisted for more than a day, I should go there.
>
> — Alison Hawthorne-Deming, Temporary Homelands:
> Essays on Nature, Spirit and Place.

One of the required writing assignments was to write a "book report" incorporating personal contemplations. While describing the relationship between the author's poetic commentary stated above and her own life experiences, Beth again demonstrated a level of engagement and reflection not evident in the classroom nor during the interview. As Beth wrote about her personal connection with gardening, she explored some compelling issues in a highly descriptive way.

> I am not sure what made gardening so pleasurable for me that summer. Was it my body's need to soak up an excess of heat and sunlight after a seemingly never-ending winter? Or was it just the smile my boyfriend beamed at me as he noticed the dirty fingernails and freckled face of his outdoorsy companion? Was my desire to grow things a sign of my mental and physical rebirth after several years of perpetual exhaustion and emotional indifference, or simply the discovery of a love for all things green?

Perhaps most meaningful about the whole project was my subtle realization that I felt comfortable kneeling in the dirt and picking through the intricate web of fuzzy vines in a search for perfectly ripened, mild tasting cukes. At a time in my life when so many questions loomed in my mind - Where will I finish college? What kind of job will I find? Will I ever feel content? I understood that preparing soil, planting seeds, watering plants, and harvesting homegrown vegetables made me feel alive, active and productive. Perhaps any place where I could find a small piece of earth to plant flowers or veggies could feel like home. While it took me some time to recognize that I felt at ease with my hands immersed in warm, summer soil, the realization that my conception of one's own place in the world was far from universal came as a rather unexpected shock.

Reading this essay was like opening a window to a world not perceived before. The voice that Beth lacked in the classroom seemed to emerge through her reflective writings. Perhaps Beth's perspective is even more valuable than that obtained from the other students because of her unassuming nature and relatively non-experiential stance in the classroom.

Beth's perspective demonstrated here is also significant, as she admitted to having few experiences writing in such a personal manner and found the exercise awkward. Yet, her story of personal awakening seemed highly engaging for her and she admitted to being inspired by the book. Perhaps Beth's experiences in this course can help to answer a question that developed during this research. Can students who are somewhat resistive to experiential learning still learn in experiential ways given the opportunity to do so? Perhaps experiential learning can also occur through silent "active listening" or through opportunities to write critically and reflectively for those who are hesitant to learn in experiential ways.

Defining Experiential Learning

Each story described above was analyzed in light of what it means to learn in an experiential manner. The initial definition used for this research emerged from a review of the diverse literature and an analysis of the primary theorists. It was then categorized into four principles: engagement, reflection, responsibility and relevance. While other principles of experiential learning were noted in the literature, these four principles most closely aligned with the theories of John Dewey. His theories formed the theoretical foundation of this research and will be used to analyze what it means to learn experientially.

This definition was used during each interview as students were, first, given a brief definition of experiential learning; second, requested to clarify the term in their own words, to ensure understanding of the principle and obtain their perspectives; and third, asked if experiential learning occurred for them in the course. In addition to the following definition, analysis of students' insights on experiential learning will become central to this research process. The act of verbalizing each principle, though, revealed the potential complexity and lack of clarity inherent in each. As the definition was applied and discussed the borders used to delineate each principle became less and less clear cut. The complexity of the definition may become a weakness within the research. For the purpose of this monograph, however, the following is a brief discussion of how experiential learning was defined and applied according to its four principles: engagement, reflection, responsibility and relevance.

Engagement as active learning and inquiry-based learning

Engagement, the first principle of experiential learning, is described within the literature in two ways. First, engagement is present within experiential learning when students are learning material in an active, rather than a passive, way. Second, the process of learning through inquiry, or a teaching/learning methodology called inquiry-based learning, can be described as engaged learning. Although active learning can be described physically as learning through hands-on tasks, central to this aspect is the quality of students' mental experiences. There must be "active intellectual involvement in the learning experience [that is] characterized by increased insight" (Kyriacou and Marshall, 1989, p. 2 as stated in Anthony, 1996). Engagement is described more specifically by others as the process of analyzing and evaluating information in an intellectual way, rather than just passively receiving it and memorizing it (King, 1993; Dewey, 1916).

The second level of engagement, inquiry-based learning, is described in the literature as participating in a task where answers to questions are not provided. It becomes a challenge for each student to grapple, struggle and ultimately discover answers, given the information at hand. This inductive approach to learning moves from the gathering of specific information to the formation of general concepts. Bateman (1990), described this process well when he stated, "give the students a set of facts and slip the leash. They speculate, they create new concepts, they apply old concepts, they test, they reject, they ask for more evidence" (p. 18). This inquiry-based approach is considered intellectually engaging and stimulating for the students involved.

Reflective learning

The second principle of experiential learning is the principle of reflection. According to Dewey, reflection is "the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence" (Dewey, 1916, p. 144). Reflection is what enables the learner to learn from the experience. By reflecting on the experience, its quality increases and our ability to act with an "end in view" becomes possible. Reflection also occurs during an analysis of the process of learning. The focus then becomes the insights and dialogues that can occur through reflecting on this process. (Joplin, 1981; Perry, 1995). Reflecting on the end result as well as on the process of learning is a very necessary step for experiential learners.

Responsible learning

Dewey also wrote about students as responsible and self-reliant learners. He rejected traditional education's tendency to put students in a passive role in the classroom. Instead, he promoted the development of a learning community, where "all individuals have the opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility" (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). The instructors serve to guide students in deriving meaning from the learning experiences. According to Horwood & Herbert (1995), "active" does not translate into "experiential". The main distinction is the "responsibility assigned to the students to derive meaning from what they have done" (p. 21). Concepts such as self-reliant learning, taking ownership, and learning independently are seen as similar concepts to taking responsibility for one's learning, yet different in many respects. For example, self-reliant learners have trust in, or are dependent upon, themselves. All concepts pertain to the student an active rather than passive learner.

Relevant learning

The fourth characteristic, relevancy, refers to both experiences that connect (and are relevant) to the learner's past experiences, present interests or future goals, and experiences that connect with societal and "real world" uses or concerns. Relevancy is an integral component of Dewey's theory of experience because he sought to connect learning with what students already know— their "internal conditions"— (i.e. interests and motivations), as "the starting point for all learning" (Dewey, 1938, p. 74). Personal relevance is also central to Joplin's (1981) definition of experiential learning. She believes that experiential learning is based on the assumption that learning starts with the students' relationship with the topic (Joplin, 1981).

Summary

Creating a definition of experiential learning is challenging and complex. A review of the literature reveals the vast number of situations that can be described as experiential and the large number of descriptors associated with the term. According to this literature, and the theories of John Dewey, experiential learning occurs when students are engaged intellectually and involved in an active way, take responsibility, ownership and control over their learning, reflect on the process and the product of their learning, and connect their learning with what is relevant — to themselves and to the world around them.

Going back to the students' stories, the reader can see how both Alissa and Beth learned in experiential ways. Yet, the manner by which they demonstrated their learning differed. In addition, both students did not demonstrate all four principles of experiential learning within the scenarios described and they indicated a lack of experiential learning in other situations. Overall, however, each story demonstrated individual student perspectives that defined and shaped how they learned and whether they learned in experiential ways.

Next Steps

While many of the students in this course learned in ways that can be described as highly experiential, beginning analysis of the data reveal multiple levels of meaning that exist for each student and within the course as a whole. Research results can not be examined without including its many variables, such as students' characteristics and the instructor's teaching style. The course is composed of students who differ by personalities, goals and prior experiences. For example, Alissa stated an interest in art as a potential career and demonstrated a receptivity to more active approaches to learning (as indicated in an educational autobiography completed as part of this research). On the other hand, Beth's four year college experience failed to expose her to much more than the traditional lecture approach. Additionally, as a second semester Senior, thoughts on upcoming graduation were pervasive (also indicated on her educational autobiography). What is the relationship between these students' prior experiences and goals and how they learned in this course? Further analysis of the data will reveal this relationship between student characteristics and how they learn in experiential ways.

Also central to this research are the variables of instructor characteristics and teaching styles. The instructor, and the one who developed this course, challenged herself to integrate an interest in experiential learning and knowledge of art and contemplative practice into a fairly unique course. Students indicated, during the interviews, that teaching style and course structure influenced their perceptions in multiple ways. Further analysis of the data will incorporate the variables of instructor characteristics.

An additional issue for further consideration revolves around whether students need to learn how to learn in experiential ways. My data suggests, at a preliminary level, that as they develop as scholars, students need to learn how to challenge issues, reflect intellectually or compare issues raised in class with relevant experiences. Should experiential courses play a role in teaching students how to learn experientially, or should we expect students to respond appropriately if given the right combination of experiential opportunities? These complex questions address the intricacies of how students learn.

Overall, and in accordance with a learning-centered approach to teaching and learning, this course became "a dynamic setting where pedagogical practices and learners' characteristics [met] and where the quality of this interaction influence[d] the outcomes" (Barr and Tagg 1995; Menges and Svinicki 1991; Millar 1996; Palmer 1993, 1997, as stated in Stage, Muller, Kinzie and Simmons, 1998). Like the Genzu Mandala, as data analysis progressed from one step to the next, complexities not realized through superficial examination were revealed. Further analysis of the data will be accomplished through strategies such as creating matrixes, focusing on time, role and context, and triangulating the data (Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M, 1994). The variables of student and instructor characteristics, as well as the issue of learning how to learn in experiential ways, will all need to be included in data analysis in order to create a more complete picture of how students learned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the question of how students are learning in experiential courses is not an easy one to answer. Analysis of interview transcripts, reflective writings and course observation notes will reveal student perspectives within each of their stories. Defining what experiential learning really means is an important step. Being open to what else may be found is an important piece of the qualitative process and necessary to ascertain if students are learning in ways not considered before. A learning-centered approach will focus not solely on "did experiential learning happen?", but on the more complex issue of "were the students ultimately experiential learners?" Questions and investigations such as this one will contribute to the growing research within the field and are needed for the field to continue to contribute to student learning.

* *In this paper, all names are alias.*

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A UNIVERSAL APPROACH TO ROPES CHALLENGE COURSES
Karinsue Fink-Miller, OTR/L

As an Occupational Therapist, I have been trained to enable challenged people to have normal life opportunities. After many professional experiences, it is now my belief that including people who have special needs with mainstream people is necessary for our growth as a community. Grouping people with differences (physical and cognitive) in a social and play based activity provides everyone with information that is needed to accept a population which continues to be cautious territory for the mainstream of our society.

In this article, I will give suggestions on how to make your program and delivery more Universal to include a diverse group of people. You will learn ideas about resources to gather, information, adaptations, and a readiness plan. This includes a questionnaire to figure out a person's functions and adaptations that can be implemented before and during a program.

There are laws being passed continually which state "don't discriminate", "include", "mainstream", and "make accessible". What does this mean to you, an Experiential Educator or a Ropes Course Facilitator? It means that you have a legal and moral obligation to evaluate your program. Are you operating under the legislative requirements? Are you discriminating when you can't be or shouldn't be?

The laws guide you on how to make your physical property available to individuals with special needs.

Public law 93-112, Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Public law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975 extended free and appropriate public education for all children with disabilities, ages 3-5.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) P.L. 101-336, 1990 gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities in private sector employment, all public services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunication. (Office of Americans with Disabilities, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice).

How do you present your program to all people? Surely, you have started the process by eliminating stereotypes and welcoming individuals regardless of age, class, gender, race, and ethnicity. So, why stop there? You need to further your boundaries and STEP OUT OF YOUR BOX.

As Adventure Based Leaders, you have a wonderful opportunity to teach and mentor the understanding and acceptance that a disability is just one of many human differences. Diversity should be celebrated as an opportunity to learn, not a fear to hide in the closet.

Observe, Ask, Implement, Adapt

As Adventure Based Leaders, you are adept at observing people's physical and emotional status. This is a key skill when making your program universal to people with special needs. Using a transdisciplinary approach will promote a better and safer program. This includes gathering the knowledge and insight of specialists, i.e Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Teacher, parent, and the individual. Then, using this information to adapt and implement your program. This team approach will help you to determine what:

- physical adaptations or special equipment could be prepared before the program,
- teaching procedure or ways to give direction that will work best for the individual (verbal, physical, simple),
- safety precautions (especially if the individual is nonverbal and/or a child).

During the program you need to openly discuss with the individual and/or the group:

- the group can work together as a team to adapt the activity for all inclusive participation (crawling vs. running, buddy spotting, rolling vs. throwing),
- safety precautions
- assume that the individual with unintelligible speech understands more, and adapt communication when this assumption is proven otherwise
- allow any individual to participate on his/her own, safely, even if movement is slow and uncoordinated,
- use of Full Value Contract (Islands of Healing, Project Adventure) to help with ridicule over differences (clumsiness, unintelligible speech, drooling, poor muscle control),

- avoid "Doll Treatment" by not being overprotective,
- remember that an individual's risk does not have to be physical to gain emotional accomplishment.

Readiness Plan

As stated previously, a transdisciplinary approach of gathering information is helpful to plan your activities when you know that your group is going to be integrated. However, as always, be flexible according to the groups dynamics and your ongoing observations of how the individuals with special needs make their own adaptations. Be prepared, but allow room to throw your plan "out the window" as the group becomes enlightened.

It is more important to know how an individual functions as opposed to what they cannot do. This includes cognitive, social, and motor functions. Each individual is protected by the law to privacy, therefore, if you do not have a signed release from medical and parental establishments, then you are not allowed to be privy to medical information. This includes diagnosis and diseases. You should know precautions and have a system planned for emergencies, i.e. first aid, 911, transport plan.

The following questionnaire can be used as a guideline to find out what, if any adaptations you will need to plan .

I. COGNITIVE QUESTIONS

	Skill	Function	Adaptation
1. Thinking process			
a. Follows direction			
b. Problem solving			
c. Judgment			
2. Attention span			
a. Concentration			
b. Self control			
c. Listening ability			
3. Release of tension			
a. Frustration tolerance			
b. Appropriate form of outlet			

II. SOCIAL QUESTIONS

	Skill	Function	Adaptation
1. Speech			
a. Verbal			
b. Nonverbal			
c. Assistive device			
2. Language			
a. Eye contact			
b. Awareness of others			
c. Awareness of environment			
d. Emotional cues of needs			

III. SENSORIMOTOR QUESTIONS

	Skill	Function	Adaptation
1. Physical Abilities			
a. Movement of limbs			
b. Ability to get around			
c. Balance			
d. Ability to hold onto objects/people			
e. Uncontrolled vs. controlled movements			
f. Protective responses			
2. Sensory			
a. Ability to move when directed			
b. Aware of up, down, etc.			
c. Vision			
d. Hearing			
e. Fears and reactions			

IV. PRECAUTIONS	Plan	Contraindications
1. Seizures		
2. Sun exposure		
3. Feeding and drinking		
4. Allergies		
5. Transferring from a wheelchair		
6. Medications		
7. Other		

Summary

Human rights laws and people's attitudes are changing the experiential education world to be more encompassing and more universal. Your legal challenge is to update your programs and courses to be more inclusive. Your moral obligation is to celebrate diversity with open arms and adapt to include people of all abilities.

In conclusion, what are the benefits of a universal program? This added diversity lends to the motto "Challenge by Choice". It enhances the philosophy of team based activities and thinking. It is an opportunity to celebrate strengths, accept limitations, and be aware of others' differences for all participants regardless of age, class, gender, race, ethnicity, and ABILITY.

References

Office of Americans with Disabilities, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Dept. of Justice P.O. Box 6618, Washington, D.C. 20035-6118

Fink-Miller, K & Miller, M. (1997,1998) Include Me Seminars Universal Ropes Course Builders, Training Manuals P.O. Box 12, Albrightsville, PA 18210

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